THOMAS HARDY AND THEODORE DREISER

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

With the publication of Jude the Obscure (1895) Hardy had finished his work with the novel. Just five years later Dreiser published Sister Carrie (1900), thus making it possible that he could have found in Hardy a model. The resemblances to the Hardyan novel in both the early and later works of Dreiser are striking and varied enough to give encouragement to a hypothesis of direct influence. The evidence in support of this hypothesis we propose to take note of carefully in this study.

The study is divided into six chapters. Chapter One focuses on the broadly pessimistic and deterministic philosophy that runs throughout the novels of both authors in the sense that both were "blown to bits" by reading evolutionary theories that attacked accepted views of man, God, and the universe. Thus, both found in the works of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer evidence that man is not the creation of a benevolent deity, but rather of the interaction of unknowable forces existing in a world of struggle where survival of the fittest is the basic law. Accordingly, both concluded that man is basically determined by the natural and social forces operating from within and without to ensure man's unhappiness.

In Chapter Two the protagonist of Sister Carrie is discussed in relation to the more deeply tragic heroes and heroines of Thomas Hardy, particularly Tess Durbeyfield. Carrie has the dreaminess of Jude and the natural vitality of Tess, and like Tess she is a child of nature. The chapter goes on to trace the Hardysque and Dreiserian theme of the fallen woman whose natural goodness and self-sacrifice for others keep her "Pure". Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891), and Jennie Gerhardt (1911), are the novels discussed in relation to this common theme.

Chapter Three takes for its subject-matter the novelists' portrayal of society in the context of Herbert Spencer's application of the theory of "the survival of the fittest" to social behaviour. Donald Farfrae in Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), and Frank Cowperwood in Dreiser's The Financier (1912), and The Titan (1914), are discussed as aggressive exponents of the Nietzschean superman figure, committing themselves to the values of materialism. Although both men win in the battle of life and survive, nevertheless, they undergo an inner spiritual defeat.

Chapter Four probes the depth of the conflict between flesh and spirit, body and soul, vice and virtue in Hardy's Jude the Obscure and Dreiser's The "Genius" (1915). Both heroes, Jude and Eugene, are sexually driven and in bondage to desire, but at the same time possess transcendental traits. In Jude's case, this contest between

the spiritual and the sensual culminates inevitably in his death; Eugene, less convincingly perhaps, eventually finds temporary ease for his divided being and restless soul in the religious doctrines of Christian Science.

Chapter Five examines Jude the Obscure and Dreiser's An American Tragedy (1925) as tragedies of "unfulfilled aims and aspirations". Initially, attention is focused upon the tragic aspect of both stories and the question of whether or not the two novels are in fact tragedies is discussed. Jude Fawley and Clyde Griffiths have opposite aims and ambitions. Jude's intellectual aspirations are contrasted with Clyde's materialistic desires. The ambition of each hero, however, is marked by failure, and the destiny of both is the same. Each is finally frustrated by forces in his nature, his society, and his circumstances.

This study concludes, in Chapter Six, by noting that characters in the novels of Hardy and Dreiser rarely come to a satisfactory accommodation with life. The novels' tragic conclusions are due, in large part, to social, cultural, and universal influences which make any sense of personal fulfilment difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

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Chapter I

Thomas Hardy and Theodore Dreiser

Hardy and Dreiser both lived through much of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. Both reacted against the Romantic movement first in the manner of Realism, later, to varying degrees, in that of Naturalism. Both at the beginning of their youth made great efforts at self-education, and moreover, both had a similar interest in history. They also shared a keen interest in the progress of science, especially as that progress influenced the philosophical thought of the age. Under the influence of such thought each gradually became more and more sceptical of traditional beliefs and eventually fell into the most rigid kind of pessimistic determinism.

The two authors seem to be very much alike, as this study is going to show, especially in thought, philosophy, vision, - perhaps in Hardy's case "vision" is the better word in so far as he tended to deny he was offering any kind of coherent philosophy in his fiction - and even in their works themselves. Some readers might even wish to argue that they share common weaknesses. In the case of Dreiser it is a critical commonplace to suggest that his English prose style is more than a little rough and ready: but as powerful a voice as that of T.S. Eliot has said much the same about Hardy. Whatever their

nature, it is the similarities between them that help to explain the influence of one on the other. But who influenced whom? Hardy had ceased to write fiction before the appearance of Dreiser's first novel, Sister Carrie (1900), hence the movement of influence could only have been from the English author to the American one.

In his Hardy in America, Carl J.Weber asserts that it is no longer possible "to ignore the plain fact that many an American realist wrote with a conscious eye upon the long fight which Hardy had put up in the battle for candour and sincerity. ... The only American novelists who escaped the power of this influence - as a force of which they were conscious - were the youngest writers, whose memories did not go back to Jude the Obscure, or even to Dreiser's Sister Carrie."[1] Weber is extremely cautious about suggesting a direct, substantial borrowing by Dreiser, but he does admit that "one can persuade himself much more easily than was possible in the case of Stephen Crane or of Hamlin Garland that one sees traces of Hardy in the work of Dreiser."[2]

Dreiser's account of his readings is sketchy, but perhaps his most significant statement about them is in a newspaper interview of 1911. In this interview, he recalls his discovery of Balzac in 1892 and goes on to say, "Balzac lasted me a year or two, then came Hardy, and after him Tolstoi. From them I learned what, in my judgment, really great books are."[3] More important than this interview, however, is a passage in the holograph of Sister Carrie. In a conversation deleted from the novel, Carrie and Bob Ames discuss at some length the novels of Balzac and Hardy - and in such a way that

we are clearly supposed to judge Carrie by the depth of her responses to them. This passage is strong evidence that Dreiser was also reading and responding to Balzac and Hardy at the time he was writing Sister Carrie in 1899. Dreiser, in fact, inverts the moral significance of the typical Balzacian novel and in so doing approaches the tragic view of life that he found in the novels of Thomas Hardy.

In the autobiographical A Book About Myself, Dreiser does not mention Hardy probably because the book ends with events of 1895. Dorothy Dudley in her Dreiser and the Land of the Free : A Novel of Facts asserts that "He read Flaubert's Madame Bovary and Thomas Hardy,"[4] but she does not specify when. According to his own chronology, Dreiser did not read Hardy until about 1896. However, there are other documents besides the holograph which testify to his continuing interest in and admiration of Hardy not only about the time he was writing Sister Carrie, but later also when Jennie Gerhardt, The Financier, The Titan and The "Genius" were being produced. In 1902, he wrote W.D.Howells that Hardy, along with Tolstoy and Howells himself, possessed "tender kindliness ... covering all of the ills of life voicing the wonder and yearning of this fitful dream, in what, to me, seems a perfect way."[5] That same year, in a letter to Richard Duffy, he called Hardy "the greatest figure in all English literature."[6] And there is the 1911 interview, mentioned above, in which he asserted that Hardy was among those authors from whom he learned what great books are.

Probably the most powerful evidence of Dreiser's having read

and admired Hardy is in his letters. Going through the three not bulky volumes of Letters of Theodore Dreiser : A Selection, we find that Hardy is mentioned several times usually in connection with the Wessex novels, which Dreiser must have read and admired. In a letter of 1911 to William Lengel, Dreiser wrote : "You will not be surprised when I tell you that few American books if any interest me. ... When I go abroad it is very different. Balzac, Zola, De Maupasant, Daudet, Flaubert and Anatole France are great towering statues to me - the best in France. In Russia I profoundly admire Tolstoy, Turgenev, Gorky and 7. ... In England George Moore first of all and after him Arnold Bennet, and H.G.Wells - his later stuff." In the same letter Dreiser goes further to add "of the older writers Thackeray, George Eliot, Henry Fielding, Charles Reade and Thomas Hardy seem the best."[8]

In a letter of 1914 to H.L.Mencken, Dreiser wrote: "When an American poet - a writer of short poems arises I instantly think of Herrick, W.E.Henley, Thomas Hardy's brooding volumes and A.E.Housman."[9] Again in another letter to Mencken on May 14, 1916 Dreiser wrote:

> I find on glancing over your letter that I haven't answered all your questions. After Balzac (1894) {,} came first Hardy (1896) and then Sienkiewicz - particularly Quo Vadis? (1897) which made a deep impression on me. About this time I did a lot of general reading, Tolstoy, Stevenson, Barrie, Dumas - I can't think of a tenth of the stuff. But Hardy, Tolstoy and Balzac stood forth in mind all this time. I have never read a line of Zola. Since 1906 or thereabouts I have

> become acquainted with Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, de Maupassant, Flaubert, Strindberg, Hauptmann etc. etc. but I couldn't possibly call them influences. They came too late. Actually I should put Hardy and Balzac first in that respect though I seriously doubt whether I was influenced for in St.Louis (1892) I was already building plays of a semi-tragic character. My mind just naturally worked that way{.}[10]

Moreover, Dreiser told Edward H.Smith on 18 April 1921:

> I would be ashamed to waste my thinking hours brooding over whether I am to be remembered. Thomas Hardy sums it up in a number of his poems. He makes the thought so ridiculous and so pathetic that reading him would cure any thinking man. I only wish I might, without further offence, commend them to the attention of Harris because he is sadly in need of a cure for ego mania.[11]

And in later years he characterized Hardy as a tragic writer equal to Euripides and Sophocles,[12] because in him Dreiser found an understanding much closer to his own deep felt belief in the essential tragedy of life. Such novels as Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure, as Donald Pizer points out, "left a permanent mark on Dreiser's portrayal of the tragic nature of life. He was above all moved by Hardy's youthful figures who bring to experience a craving for life and a responsiveness to beauty who are tragically handicapped by social restrictions by the uncontrollable power of desire, and by a cosmic force which catches all men up in a web of action not of their own making."[13]

Dreiser would have liked to see Hardy and talk to him personally.

So far as we know Dreiser thought twice of visiting Hardy. The first occasion was when Grant Richard (his publisher) met Dreiser in Paris, at Madame Geruy's bar. The publisher urged him to relax at his Berkshire home and then join him in a week's walk through the Hardy country in the English spring[14] - Hardy whom Dreiser so admired - but Dreiser would not be stayed. He would get the next boat.[15] As for the second occasion, it was after a reception at the Paris P.E.N. Club, which Dreiser and Helen left to go to London, where Dreiser was about to establish one of the warmest friendships of his life with Otto Kylmann, a director of the Constable firm. He had hoped to go to Dorset to visit Thomas Hardy, but Dreiser was so smitten by Kylmann that he decided simply to remain in London.

Whatever the precise influence might be - as will emerge later - Dreiser and Hardy run on parallel tracks, and the two men suggest each other in a score of ways. Superficially, of course, they may seem to be far apart: the gorgeous colours of Hardy are never encountered in Dreiser. But that difference lies entirely in materials; in ideas and methods they are curiously alike. To each the salient fact of life is its apparent meaninglessness, its sordid cruelty, and its mystery. Each stands in amazement before the human condition and finds esoteric significances in it. Both brood over specific scenes and see life as representing a vast tragedy and the people in it as victims of an unkind destiny over which they have little control.

Darwin and the Crisis of Faith:

The Examples of Hardy and Dreiser

The most obvious similarity between the two authors is found in the kind of pessimistic, even deterministic, philosophy that runs throughout their novels. Both writers in their own ways were "blown to bits" by reading the evolutionary theories of Darwin, Huxley and Spencer - theories that attacked accepted views of man, God and the universe. The publication of The Origin of Species by Darwin caused an intellectual and religious upheaval in late November of 1859. The thesis of the book impressed itself upon the public mind with sudden violence, and the results had far-reaching effects in almost every quarter of intellectual activity. Lionel Stevenson, in his comprehensive study of the influence of the Darwinian theory on English thought, indicates that The Origin emphasized "the physical basis of life and the identity of man with the lower orders of nature," and "it appeared to obviate the possibility of a spiritual element in man and of a supernatural creator of the universe."[16] Furthermore, "Darwin's emphasis on the struggle for survival suggested a wastefulness and cruelty in nature, incompatible with divine beneficence."[17] In Darwin's universe, "the idea of man as the accidental product of blind physical processes," as Stevenson goes further to remark, and nature as indifferent to the sufferings of living beings, encouraged the growth of "fatalistic and hedonistic philosophies."[18]

Hardy

When The Origin was published, its impact was so immense that it had a profound influence on the literature of England and America.

Hardy was only nineteen when The Origin appeared, and probably read it almost at once. His response was undoubtedly immediate and vigorous. "No intellectual influence as important as that of Darwin affected the form of Hardy's thought," writes Harvey Webster of Hardy's formative years.[19] Darwin, with his patient observation of seedlings, insects, and birds, thought of nature as the scene of the struggle for survival:

> What a struggle between the several kinds of trees must here have gone on during long centuries, each annually scattering its seeds by the thousand; what war between insect and insect - between insects, snails, and other animals with birds and beasts of prey - all striving to increase, and all feeding on each other, or on the trees, their seeds and seedlings, or on the other plants which first clothed the ground and thus checked the growth of the trees![20]

Darwin concludes his chapter on "the Struggle for Existence" with the observation that "each organic being is striving to increase," and "has to struggle for life, and to suffer great destruction." Only "the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply."[21]

It seems most probable that Darwin drew Hardy's attention to the battle of life and the continuous combat for survival in all forms of nature. Hardy had earlier interpreted nature to be wrought by love, planned for the purpose of giving happiness to mankind. In "To Outer Nature" he wrote:

> When I early sought thee,
> Omen-scouting,

All undoubting
Love alone had wrought thee-

Wrought thee for my pleasure,
Planned thee as a measure
    For expounding
    And resounding
Glad things that men treasure.[22]

But this notion, the pure product of conventional religious teaching, soon passed beyond recapture. In a later poem, "In A Wood", Hardy wrote to show how the ruthless struggle for survival is at its highest intensity, and the trees are blighting each other with poison:

    Great growths and small
Show them to men akin -
    Combatants all![23]

Even in Hardy's second published work in prose, Under the Greenwood Tree (1872), we seem, as Morse Peckham indicates, "to be living in a kind of idyllic providential world," and in Far From the Madding Crowd (1874) in "a casual world."[24] But in The Return of the Native (1878), which is written within fifteen years of the publication of The Origin, the picture becomes completely different, in that "coincidence, or more accurately, accident," as we will explain in detail later in this chapter, "is indeed the means whereby the story is carried on."[25]

Dreiser, too, like Hardy, was in his twenties when he came across the evolutionary theories of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer. Dreiser felt his lingering Catholicism drain away as he read Huxley's Science and Hebrew Tradition (1893), Science and Christian Tradition

(1894) and Spencer's First Principles (1862). Spencer, as W.A.Swanberg explains, disposed of religion as being a concern of the "unknowable" interesting only to think over but beyond the realm of true knowledge or facts - facts which alone were the interest and domain of science. Man was simply a stage in evolution, a creature responding helplessly to inner physico-chemical actions over which he had but little control. Man was a tiny particle of energy, a mere atom, bereft of authority over his own internal compulsions, and also buffeted by larger external forces beyond his control.[26]

Thus far Hardy and Dreiser found in the works of Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley and Spencer evidence that man is not the special creation of a benevolent deity, but the creation of the interaction of unknowable forces existing in a world of struggle where survival of the fittest is the basic law. Both concluded that man is basically determined or fated by the natural and social forces operating from within and from without. Running through Hardy's novels are references to the "First Cause ... of lower moral quality"[27] than man, to the "concatenations of phenomena"[28] that determine man's actions, to the indifference of stars "whose cold pulses were beating ... in serene dissociation from ... wisps of human life,"[29] and to the inability of mankind to become stronger "while the inexorable laws of nature remain what they are."[30] Dreiser's determinism is less bitter than Hardy's - there is no ranting against "the President of the Immortals" (Tess, 330) who has sported with Tess - but there is the recognition that "among the forces

which sweep and play throughout the universe, untutored man is but a wisp in the wind."[31] Dreiser did not get his determinism from Hardy, but he learned a great deal from Hardy about how to make this determinism a shaping force in the creation of a work of literature.

As has been said, Hardy and Dreiser were quasi-determinists remarkably distinguished in English and American literature by the grave sincerity and severity with which they depict the darker aspects of modern life. As a novelist Hardy may be taken as a typical representative of pessimistic fiction. In his pessimism we note a deeper tone of sadness, a sense of almost utter helplessness in grappling with the complex intricacies of modern life and the subtleties of emotion that it is apt to produce. His heroes and heroines are mostly represented as engaged in a desperate struggle; they are hampered by adverse events, confused by strange entanglements, moved against their will by ingrained propensities, over-powered by uncontrollable forces, and finally made to succumb in taciturn despair to the impending doom. When one sits and views with the eye of the common man the fourteen great novels, the stories, the half-a-dozen volumes of verse, and the mighty achievement of the Dynasts, what other impression is left than that not only of sadness, but of that hopeless sadness which pessimism engenders. In The Return of the Native the tragic gloom becomes more intense and fearful as we watch the death of the mother, the bitterness of the husband, the flight of the wife, the grim drowning in a dark pool, and last, for anti-climax, a second marriage. Tess in the grim dawn at Stonehenge, Marty South in the moonlight whispering over the grave of Giles

Winterborne, Henchard at Elizabeth-Jane's wedding with his pitiful gift of the caged goldfinch, the whole sad and sordid story of Jude, the gallant Trumpet-Major swinging off into the dark with a smile on his lips and death at his heart, the vast slaughter of the Dynasts, brooded over by that pitiless Will that pushes man hither and thither: all these creations of Hardy's leave in the mind, beyond a shadow of doubt, a massive sense of life's sad futility. This is Hardy; in story after story he unrolls the tragic map of life as he sees it, showing us the wistful figures of men striving after worlds which they do not attain, combating evils which they did not create; they cannot help but yield to forces too strong for them, and in the long run they are led to their doom by some relentless fatality.

Similarly, life affected Dreiser as immensely tragic, hopeless, and piteous. Therefore, he found Hardy's gloomy melancholia closer to his feelings about life than were Balzac's relatively shallow concerns. As the old mentor brooded over the Wessex scene, the young author, an inordinately sentimental man, brooded over the American scene, seeing it as one vast tragedy and the people in it as victims of an unkind destiny over which they had no control. Dreiser was new to the business of putting together a novel; but he had seen in Hardy how a vision of life similar to his own could be shaped into a moving tragedy, as he set out to relate the story of Sister Carrie and the life of Jennie Gerhardt. While Jennie Gerhardt was in the making, Dreiser had already started to explore and detail the pitiable lives of two powerful men, Eugene Witla in The "Genius", and Frank Algernon Cowperwood in the Trilogy of Desire, and Dreiser's tragic vision of

life culminates in that grim but sprawling story which tells in minute detail the life story of Clyde Griffiths in An American Tragedy. Just as in Hardy, in Dreiser one feels strongly the sad futility of life. Carrie Meeber, from beginning to end is in search of that "radiance of delight" which she sees will make her happy, but we realize - as she does not - that her seeking will never lead to happiness and that she will only "dream such happiness as she may never feel" (Carrie, 462). We feel pity, too, for Jennie as she goes back to her lonely home after the death of Lester Kane, and there, like Carrie Meeber before her, she faces the long years with dry eyes and empty heart: "Days and days in endless reiteration, and then -?"[32].

This pessimistic philosophy we encounter in the narration of the life of Jennie is the same profound pessimism which gives a darker colour to the best that we have from Hardy, Moore, Zola and the great Russians. It is the pessimism which comes with the discovery that the riddle of life is insoluble. One can discern no intelligible sequence of cause and effect in the agonies of Jennie Gerhardt. Very much similar to Tess, she is of a nobler, finer metal. And like Tess, there is within her a capacity for service, a great capacity for love, a great capacity for happiness. And yet all that life has to offer her, in the end, is the mere license to live. The days stretch before her "in endless reiteration." She is a prisoner doomed to perpetual punishment for some fanciful, incomprehensible crime against the gods who make their mirthless sport of us all. In The "Genius" (1915) and A Trilogy of Desire, with the two supermen figures,

Eugene Witla and Frank Cowperwood, Dreiser describes the path to success, and perhaps to happiness. But unfortunately, with both Witla and Cowperwood, success becomes defined in material terms alone - a fact which both characters tragically realize at the end. Losing their self-reliance and personal integrity results in their eventual downfall.

Despite the fact that the two authors share a rather sombre view of life, the colours we encounter in Hardy are darker than those of Dreiser. The understanding of life attained by Hardy's protagonists frequently leads to recognition, despair, and a wish to put an end to their suffering and end their lives of pain. Tess is "almost glad" to be captured after the murder of Alec because her experience has taught her that happiness with Angel "could not have lasted" (Tess, 328). Jude denounces with Job the very birth which has led to so much suffering and so little joy: "'Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said there is a man child conceived. ... Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?'" (Jude, 320). This recognition of the waste of the hero's life may be seen as the kind of anagnorisis that frequently occurs at the end of a Greek or Elizabethan tragedy. Hardy's heroes understanding and acquiescence in the rightness of their destinies make them more akin to Shakespeare's heroes than Dreiser's.

There can be no doubt that the publication of The Origin of Species (1859) by Darwin, Essays and Reviews (1860) by several authors

called "the Seven against Christ", Spencer's First Principles (1862), and Huxley's Man's Place in Nature (1863) caused an intellectual upheaval that challenged people's conception of nature. "Nature as a kindly Queen-motherly Dame"; "a rational arrangement, ... {and} a benevolent one,"[33] planned by God for the purpose of giving pleasure to mankind, are no longer widely-held concepts in the mid-nineteenth century. This gave a distinctive mark to the years in which Hardy first came into contact with the intellectual trends of his day and age. It was Hardy's temperament - his unusually sensitive response to pain and suffering - which, combined with particular conditions of family and local background, made him so vulnerably exposed to the intellectual and spiritual disturbances of his time. Born in 1840, and having grown up in a High Church environment which formed the natural setting for his religious fervour, and for his desire to take orders, he met, at this susceptible age, the full flood of this naturalistic thinking, in the Essays and Reviews first, and soon after in The Origin of Species - to be reinforced by Spencer's First Principles and Huxley's Man's Place in Nature. It was under the impact of the first two works that Hardy's orthodox faith broke down.[34]

Another point of considerable significance is that Hardy came to maturity at the most dramatic moment in the intellectual revolution of the nineteenth century, and, like all sensitive minds, he suffered by its ravages. Reading in Darwin about natural selection, struggle, isolation, sexual selection, heredity, and kindred theories, "it was natural for Hardy", as Stevenson points out, "to see blind chance

operating in every event of life. In his novels he was content to accept ... blind chance as the controlling force of the universe ..."[35]. The fact is several critics comment on this aspect of Hardy's novels and on "chance" as the controlling force of his universe. Philip Drew, for example, indicates that Hardy usually "places his characters in a world at the mercy of hazardry," and yet "takes equal care to qualify the operations of chance."[36] Chance, as Drew goes further to explain, "plays a prominent part in all the novels, and the characters think of themselves as the victims of good or bad luck, ..."[37].

Chance in Hardy's novels represents the power behind or over coincidence and accidental happenings rather than the symbol for Nature's indifference. Chance, in Hardy's universe, joins itself with Circumstance and other unsympathetic powers to assure man's unhappiness. In his novels Hardy, as Walter Allen writes, "is intent to show that the stars in their courses fight against the aspiring, the man or woman who would rise above the common lot through greatness of spirit, of ambition, or passion. ... It is silly to blame Hardy for the emphasis he places on coincidence; simply, he believed in coincidence."[38] Thus chance may often appear cruel because "accident" and "coincidence" seem to be constantly working against the possibility of happiness.

It is "blind chance", indeed, or, "dicing time" or "Crass Casualty" as Hardy put it in the world of Hap[39] which has woven the web of life blindly, and, by accident, evolved in man a sensitive and intelligent being doomed to suffering, because his ideals and

aspirations are rarely or never fulfilled in this absurd existence.40 With this deterministic trend was interwoven a darker pattern of philosophical pessimism that pervades most of the Wessex novels, the purpose of which is partly to show how Chance and Circumstance govern almost absolutely the lives of the characters. These characters in their struggle for existence lead hard lives during which they wage an unequal battle against fate - against Chance and Circumstance. The fact is Hardy seems to be "manipulating fate against them"[41] so that in the end they are dragged down by an inevitable set of forces, internal and external, which eventually defeat and destroy them. They almost all fall in turn: the Henchards and the Gileses, the Tesses and the Judes seem as though they were "predestinate."

The fact that his characters are subject to forces often beyond their control is clear in most of Hardy's major Wessex novels. In The Return of the Native, probably more than in any other of Hardy's novels, we feel the power of these forces which control man's destiny - and the characters themselves are fully aware of this fact. As Mrs.Yeobright comes to see Clym to attempt a reconciliation, she knocks at his door; Eustacia hears Clym say "Mother" and does not know that he is talking in his sleep. Mrs. Yeobright believes her son refuses her entrance and starts her weary journey home. She tells of her son's treatment to the passing Johnny Nonsuch, who later tells Clym of her bitter reproaches - which no one would have known otherwise, for she lies down to rest, is bitten by an adder, and dies before reaching her home. Eustacia, instead of blaming herself when Clym's mother is turned from his door,

blames some colossal Prince of the World (The Native, 304). Realizing that she cannot escape, she weeps bitterly: "How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me! ... I do not deserve my lot! O, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conceived world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blighted and crushed beyond my control!" (The Native, 357). Wildeve and Clym, are conscious, too, of the power beyond themselves. Wildeve says to Eustacia, "the Fates have not been kind to you, Eustacia Yeobright" to which she answers: "I have nothing to thank them for" (The Native, 289). As for Clym, Hardy says of him "he did sometimes think he had been ill-used by fortune" (The Native, 382). Thus these unsympathetic powers join themselves with other factors like Chance, and work together to ensure man's unhappiness and ruin.

In The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), it is strange that Hardy is at so much pains to make his actors completely conscious of the Power, or fate which is controlling them. Nearly all the characters are conscious of some sort of super power over which they have no control. They know that the "iron hand of necessity" (Mayor, 196) directs their actions. No protagonist in the rest of nineteenth century fiction endures such a bitter defeat as that of Michael Henchard. Henchard seems aware of the power termed "the iron hand". He often expresses this feeling in the novel. Saved from suicide, he believes himself in "Somebody's hand" (Mayor, 229); more often he is convinced that a "power" is working against him. His wife, at the very beginning, "plodded on in the shade of the hedge, silently thinking; she had the hard, half-apathetic expression of one who deems anything possible at

the hands of Time and Chance, except, perhaps, fair play" (Mayor, 3-4). Moreover, her words were "in the resigned tone of a fatalist" (Mayor, 14). Farfrae, too, belongs to this fatalistic type. After he is chosen Mayor, he says, "see how it's ourselves that are ruled by the Powers above us!" (Mayor, 186). And comparing Elizabeth-Jane to Burns's mouse, Hardy says, "she had that field-mouse fear of the coulter of destiny despite fair promise, which is common among the thoughtful who have suffered early from poverty and oppression" (Mayor, 67). It is clear throughout the story that a Power is in control of the universe, and there can be little question of the cruelty of its operation. Though Henchard's struggle against these forces is remarkably valiant, few feel that he deserves his fate. We agree with him that his defeat is bitter, and we are impressed that he sees his punishment as "not greater than {he} can bear" (Mayor, 239). Whatever punishment he does deserve, the agony that comes upon him is excessive rather than just.

In The Woodlanders (1887), Hardy approaches consistent determinism more closely than he did in The Mayor of Casterbridge. All the characters are generally aware of how little power they have to direct events. A concatenation of incidents and accidents that aided in spoiling Giles's carefully prepared dinner had their own cause, yet Giles was helpless to prevent them. No wonder he felt "that the fates were against him."[42] Fitzpiers feels that all is determined as though by the hands of a clock. What the characters feel, Hardy emphasizes by his own statements. He remarks that Grace Melbury moves as by clockwork. Destiny, he says, is responsible for Marty's labourer's hand. Giles

could not prevent Fitzpiers' coming to know Grace. It seems as if things were doomed to happen.

Hardy's deterministic philosophy finds its supreme and final prose expression in Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891) and Jude the Obscure (1895). The progress from ungoverned chance to cruel determinism are in these two tragedies united in a positive way. From the death of Prince, to the knowledge of Tess's ill-luck with Alec, and the failure of her marriage with Clare, the mother accepts all these incidents as though some high and uncompromising hand is dealing out these disappointments. When her mother hears of the wrecked marriage Hardy says, "after her burst of disappointment, Joan began to take the mishap as she had taken Tess's original trouble, as she would have taken a wet holiday or failure in the potato crop" (Tess, 215). Tess's milkmaid friend, Marian, after Clare had gone, says to Tess: "You have no faults, deary; that I am sure of. And he's none. So it must be something outside ye both" (Tess, 236). Above all other characters of the story, Tess herself is the fullest expression of fatalism. From the very beginning she is resigned to her doom: "The honesty, directness, and impartiality of elemental enmity disconcerting her but little" (Tess, 234). Her consciousness of her innocent life makes her doom all the more tragic: "Never in her life - she could swear it from the bottom of her soul - had she intended to do wrong; yet these hard judgments had come. Whatever her sins, they were not sins of intention, but of inadvertence, and why should she have been punished so persistently?" (Tess, 295). No wonder she longed for death! "Sheer experience had already taught her in some circumstances, there was one

thing better than to lead a good life, and that was to be saved from leading any life whatever" (Tess, 204).

The case of Jude is just as hopeless as that of Tess. Fate is against him in every sense. Heredity, - the Fawley family had never been happy in wedlock, - coincidence, convention, and every other tool known to Fate, is brought to play upon his pitiful life. Most pathetic of all is that he should possess such an abnormally sensitive nature: it is this fact that causes his defeats at the hands of Fate to be especially tragic.

We feel the pain of this tragedy all the more because Jude does nothing culpable to bring it about. Indeed it is deeply ironic that it is his finer feelings that set the tragic action in motion. He is discharged from his first position because he felt too kindly toward some crows and wanted them to have food. This result astounds him; "Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for" (Jude, 17). The great tragedy of the story is obviously Jude's failure to attend to the university of Christminster. It is true that Jude's educational ambitions are derided by most of those around him, but Hardy insists on the extreme frustration at his denial that Jude experiences. We know of his ability to learn and his willingness to make extreme sacrifices for an education. The crushing of these hopes is one of the most pitiful things in English fiction. He is, indeed, a "predestinate Jude" (Jude, 38); "he might battle with his evil star" (Jude, 62), but he must finally submit to "the humours of things"

(Jude, 96). Sue Fawley is seen vaguely meditating that "the First Cause worked automatically like a somnambulist, and not reflectively like a sage; that at the framing of the terrestrial conditions there seemed never to have been contemplated such a development of emotional perceptiveness among the creatures subject to those conditions as that reached by thinking and educated humanity" (Jude, 270). When Phillotson asks her, "'who is to blame then? Am I?'" She answers back, "'No. I don't know! The universe, I suppose - things in general, because they are so horrid and cruel!'" (Jude, 176). The cruelty, then, is not in man - despite the fact that the characters in Jude are well capable of being cruel to each other - but in "things in general": in the uncontrollable destiny which directs our lives, tyrannically or blindly. It is clear after all that Jude is the victim of a determined state of things. This is his destiny and everything from the beginning has been beyond his control. It is obvious that fate is represented as cruel by Hardy, but not so human nature. Most of his men are good and noble in their impulses till they are thwarted and frustrated. His characters like the Henchards and the Gileses, the Tesses and the Judes are worthy of our praise and pity because they have been heavily laden with sufferings and sorrows which they did not deserve, and are kinder to one another than fate is kind to them.

From this sketchy analysis of Hardy's major works we note that the impact of the Darwinistic and positivistic ideas on Hardy was tremendous. This impact reached its apex of practically uncontested power in the years when Hardy wrote these works through all of which

the feeling prevails that our fates and actions are governed by something not ourselves - we get the feeling that we are all like Jude, "predestinate". In such a chance-governed universe, we note that man becomes an automaton subject to the inevitable workings of the First Cause. In such a world, man is unable to achieve fulfilment or shape his destiny - unless of course he shared Nietzsche's view that fulfilment came from accepting his destiny - because he is all the time exposed to some inescapable forces and to natural law. In the face of this destiny and these inevitable forces working inside and outside man to which he is subject, human striving, sacrifice and suffering are futile. All this terrible suffering seems to have been endured in vain. Individuals suffer and eventually die to no purpose. It would seem that the world is an ill-conceived one in which, as Schopenhauer has argued, not to have been born would have been best.

As previously noted, Hardy's characters are dragged down by external forces, outside themselves, which eventually defeat and destroy them. His world is ruled by a kind of determinism. His plots, therefore, are marked, in all periods of his career by surprising concurrences of events which we may call "coincidences." Whatever else they may mean philosophically, the consequences of these coincidences underline how much the individual seems to be at the mercy of fate. This aspect of his methods of plot construction is noticed by Beach: "He seems to have read life in terms of action, of objective action; in terms of brute incident, things happening."[43] These coincidences are links in a concatenation of incidents tending toward destruction for

some. They are not only parts of a determined system, but of a system determined for evil. In The Mayor of Casterbridge, for instance, we know that Henchard is doomed from the moment he drinks at the furmity tent at Weydon Priors; thereafter, the instruments of Fate set in action their machinery to punish him. It is chance as cruel as any in Hardy that causes Henchard to meet Lucetta. It is by chance that Farfrae stops in Casterbridge on his way to the New World, and Henchard persuades him to stay in town in order to make his fortune there. And it is mere coincidence that Farfrae and Lucetta are attracted to one another when the Scotsman goes to visit Elizabeth-Jane in High-Place Hall. Furthermore, it is the purest coincidence that Henchard should be in the magistrate's chair at the time the furmity woman, who had witnessed the sale of his first wife, came before him and revealed to the others present what he had thus far successfully concealed. Add to these fateful incidents the appearance of the long lost Newson at the inopportune time. We note there is no let-up or mercy in the action; the trend is mercilessly clear. The incidents are natural parts of a relentless plan. Of course, Henchard's fate would have been different had he been a man of a different temperament and character. But Hardy's point seems to be that destiny works through those characteristics, even the admirable ones, that distinguish the individual. Thus Tess's "Purity" does not save her, and Henchard's over-honesty contributes to his downfall.

Fateful incidents, without the provocation which urged on the destruction of Henchard, moved likewise against Giles in The Woodlanders. Giles is completely borne down by such incidents from

that day on which he chanced to meet Felice on the high-way and offended her to the point where she declined to grant him longer leases on her property which he loses as the result of a group of further coincidences.

In Tess of the d'Urbervilles this is more certainly true. There are many fateful incidents like Durbeyfield's learning of his lineage, the killing of the old horse, Tess's chance encounter with Alec who is there to take advantage of her tiredness and discouragement after a fight with some other workers, the series of events which frustrate Tess's attempt to confess to Angel, culminating in letters going under rugs or otherwise going astray. Again, her chance encounter with Mr.Clare's sons as she makes her weary journey to Angel's home is indeed crucial. Instead of meeting the kindly father, she sees and hears the narrow-minded brothers, is discouraged, and returns to her lonely battle for a living without having made an appeal for assistance. Finally, the death of her father and its consequences and the return of Angel just too late - all are parts of a determined series which spell her doom. Very much the same is true of Jude. Jude's first meeting with Arabella, and his other meeting with her when she is a bar maid in the tavern: these coincidences hurry Jude on to ruin.

In story after story thus far, Hardy unrolls the map of life as he sees it, showing us wistful figures of men striving after worlds which they do not attain, and combating evils which they did not create. Even after Jude the Obscure Hardy continues to see human destiny as a problem involving inescapable forces, and Nature as a process governed

by Chance. In the Dynasts (1904-08), for example, published half a century after The Origin of Species appeared, the influence of Darwin is still evident, and the world which Hardy deplores to the end is one of fierce struggle, a fight between man and circumstances with odds at a hundred to one against. What can man do living in such a condition? The best plan would appear to be one of resignation and submission - even though this brings no relief. Those who submit get exactly the same disaster and sorrow as those who rebel: Eustacia and Wildeve, Marty South and Tess. Hardy thus shares that philosophy of the second half of the nineteenth century which tended toward a complete acceptance of man's "insignificance," inherited from the evolutionary discoveries of Darwin and Spencer as they were soon popularized by Huxley. It is obvious then, that Darwin has given Hardy what he saw as the truth about natural conditions as they actually are, and our only hope is that these conditions may change.

Dreiser

Like Hardy, Dreiser, as previously mentioned, was in his twenties when he came to hear of Darwin, Spencer, Wallace and Tyndall, and made up his mind to explore their ideas. This he achieved on his way East from Chicago in 1894. He stopped at Pittsburgh, found work there, and was able to spend a great deal of his time in the Public Library, reading all the works of Balzac, Huxley and Darwin.

In 1894, Dreiser read Herbert Spencer's First Principles. Almost three decades later, writing in A Book About Myself (1922), he still

viewed the experience as one of the major events in life: "At this time I had the fortune to discover Huxley and Tyndall and Herbert Spencer, whose introductory volume to his Synthetic Philosophy (First Principles) quite blew me, intellectually to bits."[44] Likewise, as Hardy's orthodox faith broke down under the impact of Essays and Reviews and soon after of The Origin of Species, Dreiser says that Spencer destroyed his "lingering filaments of Catholicism," and "his faith in the existence of Christ, the soundness of his moral and sociologic deductions, the brotherhood of man" by showing him that "man's place in nature, his importance in the universe, this too, too solid earth, man's very identity save as infinitesimal spark of energy or a 'suspended equation' drawn or blown here and there by forces in which he moved quite unconsciously as an atom" were "all questioned and dissolved into other and less understandable things." In addition, "there was of course this other matter of necessity, internal chemical compulsion, to which I had to respond whether I would or no."[45] Man as an atom in an amoral universe, man as a kind of chemically driven mechanism - these were the images that devastated the young Dreiser.

In A Book About Myself, Dreiser treats Spencer as a mostly negative influence that destroyed his faith, and for the most part early critics accepted this judgment at face value. Elias, for example, says that reading Spencer caused Dreiser to conclude that "mankind was helpless to control its destiny and that whatever one thought or did was natural; nobody could be blamed for anything, and nobody mattered in the total scheme of things."[46] There is some

confusion here between mental and physical activity, but it is a confusion of which Dreiser was as guilty as his critics. Philip Gerber, like other critics, credits Dreiser's reading of Spencer's First Principles with:

> ...a bomblike effect which wiped out the remnants of all his previous beliefs. His most cherished hopes for mankind as a free agent in a beneficent universe now seemed naive beyond imagining. Reading Spencer, Dreiser became utterly convinced that the universe was mechanistic, man a tool poorly devised and incapable of contradicting the iron laws which governed life: a mere leaf in a storm. Upon this reading of existence all of Dreiser's fiction rests. His novels invariably ask: How well has nature equipped this individual for survival in jungle combat? And, what part do fortuitous chance and circumstance play in his fortunes?[47]

Dreiser's plays and philosophical essays published in Plays of the Natural and the Supernatural (1916), The Hand of the Potter (1918), and Hey, Rub-A-Dub-Dub! (1920) reveal his exploration in strikingly different forms of a similar concern. In these works he seemed to be increasingly absorbed in what he believed to be the tragic nature of the human condition and was seeking both to explain and dramatize this vision of life. In such realistic plays as The Girl in the Coffin (1917) and The Hand of the Potter (1918), he dealt with the theme by depicting man's inability to shape the direction of his life given his lack of control of his underlying makeup. The Hand of the Potter, in its sympathetic portrayal of a sex murder, is a particularly sensationalistic rendering of this theme. And in a series of one-act plays of the "supernatural" he sought to offer

still further examples of the indeterminacy and waywardness of life. The essays of Hey, Rub-A-Dub-Dub - a work subtitled A Book of the Mystery and Terror and Wonder of Life - deal discursively with these themes. In these essays Dreiser seems heavily influenced by Spencer's ideas of equation in which individuals' fates are controlled by the evolutionary force which requires that such unequal conditions in life as poverty and wealth or weakness and strength constantly seek but never fully achieve a balance or equilibrium. However, Dreiser expresses the same ideas symbolically in the fictional reality of the novel.

Through the novels Sister Carrie (1900) and Jennie Gerhardt (1911), one may be struck by the extraordinary consistency of the philosophy Dreiser expresses. In these two novels Dreiser begins to propose a naturalistic view of life, in which men are mere puppets of forces outside their control. As a result, man's free will is seen as practically non-existent, and life appears to be essentially purposeless. Added to that, most of Dreiser's characters do seem to be victims of chance and circumstance; and Dreiser does appear to believe in chemisms, or chemicals in the body which control our actions; and life does seem dependent on forces far beyond our control.

Beginning with his first novel, Sister Carrie, Dreiser hints at his intention by entitling the first chapter, "the Magnet Attracting: A Waif amid Forces". Later on he points out that "among the forces which sweep and play throughout the universe, untutored man is but a wisp in the wind" (Carrie, 74). The three major characters in the novel: Carrie, Hurstwood, and Drouet are portrayed as three human leaves

caught in the winds of chance and circumstance, and all three are subjected to these forces which "sweep and play throughout the universe." Among the three, the most tragic is Hurstwood who falls victim to these forces once he deserts his family and runs away with Carrie to be dragged down to complete ruin. Drouet is the only person who remains static and unchanging in the novel; nevertheless, Dreiser comments: "He could not help what he was going to do. He could not see clearly enough to wish to do diffrently. He was drawn by his innate desire to act the old pursuing part" (Carrie, 75). As for Carrie, she is tossed upward but never reaches fulfilment. Her fate, as the author shows, is "forever to be the pursuit of that radiance of delight which tints the distant hilltops of the world" (Carrie, 462). She begins as "A Waif Amid Forces" and ends in that "radiance of delight" which she sees will make her happy. But her seeking will never lead to happiness, and she will only "dream such happiness" as she "may never feel" (Carrie, 462). Thus man in Dreiser's universe, as Gerber points out, "standing in the eye of the storm, remained the puppet of these forces, a mere wisp in the wind, a leaf on the maelstrom which - through sheer accident, good luck or bad, taking no regard at all of man's puny hopes or efforts - cynically cast a few up and many down, thus producing wild extremes of fortunes."[48]

It was later that "Hardy's sense of inexorable fate"[49] came closest to Dreiser's own. "Hardy's portraits of women particularly of Tess" served to strengthen Dreiser's "confidence in trying to bring

out to the full what he discerned in character like Jennie's."[50] Lester Kane seems conscious that life is fated and voices this to Jennie: "All of us are more or less pawns. W're moved about like chessmen by circumstances over which we have no control" (Jennie, 342). Jennie herself who is described in such terms as "poor little earthling, caught in the enormous grip of chance" (Jennie, 86), and depicted in such images as being "like a rudderless boat on an endless sea" (Jennie, 340), evaluates life and gets "the feeling that the world moved in some strange, unstable way. Apparently no one knew clearly what it was all about" (Jennie, 345-346). She thinks further that "people were born and died. Some believed that the world had been made six thousand years before; some that it was millions of years old. Was it all blind chance or was there some guiding intelligence - a God?" (Jennie, 346).

Among all Dreiser's characters Jennie seems the most tragic. As previously mentioned, she is a person of strength and nobility. There is within her a great capacity for service, a great capacity for love, and a great capacity for happiness. For half a dozen years she lives with Lester without the world outside showing any interest. A certain grave respectability settles over their relation; if they are not actually married, then it is only because marriage is a mere formality, to be put off until tomorrow. But bit by bit, "time itself {which} seems to be an agent of fate,"[51] drags them into the light. Lester's Father bequeaths him a fortune on condition that in two years he must put Jennie aside. The penalty is poverty; the reward is wealth and all the pleasant and well-remembered things that will come with it: the lost friends of other days, a sense of dignity and importance, good society,

and the comradeship of decent women, particularly of one decent woman. As Lester yields, he and Jennie go their separate ways. Lester marries Letty Gerald; Vesta - Jennie's illegitimate daughter of Senator Brander - dies of typhoid fever, and five years later, Lester sends for Jennie. He is dying. When it is over, Jennie is left alone. She goes back to her lonely home to face the long years with a heart that life has deprived even of love, waiting for the release that only death can bring: "Days and days in endless reiteration, and then -?" (Jennie, 367). Richard Lehan points out that Jennie is "the victim of ... the inexorable workings of time."[52] She is the victim of her own virtue and of chance, the victim of the workings of time, and the victim of forces beyond her control.[53]

In The Financier (1912), and The Titan (1914) Dreiser has created in the person of Frank Algernon Cowperwood the supreme individualist who can make things happen, and who seems, indeed, to be in control of his fate as no previous Dreiserian character has been. In both novels we get a continued sense, "a sense that he carries greatness within him, that his future success is guaranteed,"[54] and that it is not the city, not sex, not art, not beauty, not even the creative energy of the universe that controls him. But this is mere illusion, because the very plot of both novels belies the notion that Cowperwood has control of his life. Furthermore, he is constrained by actions in the world around him over which he has no control. In this sense, like Michael Henchard in The Mayor of Casterbridge, who "did carry his fate with him,"[55] Cowperwood's "final fate resides within him just as the oak tree is contained by the acorn."[56] As death comes to

demolish Cowperwood's empire and scatter its ashes, nature retains control and man remains subject to the inevitable doom spoken by the Weird Sisters at the end of The Financier.

In The "Genius" (1915), too, fairly early in the novel, Eugene Witla, a thinly disguised characterization of Dreiser himself, reads Spencer's First Principles and is "torn up by the roots,"[57] learning that life is "nothing, save dark forces moving aimlessly" (The "Genius", 157). Later on in the novel, Eugene comes to believe that he is leading a "fated life," and that he is "the sport or toy of untoward and malicious powers, such as those which sounded and accomplished Macbeth's tragic end" (The "Genius", 580). At the very end of the novel, Witla reads Spencer's commentary on the vastness of the universe, the inability of man to understand the unknowable, and he marvels at the mystery of this universe.

It is obvious, then, that like Hardy, Dreiser was deeply impressed by Spencer's theory of evolution which is clearly indicated by the mixed scientific jargon in his novels particularly in the first two volumes of the Trilogy, The Financier and The Titan, and the images based on Spencerian concepts. His further discovery of Huxley, Spencer, and Tyndall made him rely heavily, I suspect, on Spencer's First Principles, and he created as a result one of the most consistent fictional universes in literature - a universe containing vast "forces which sweep and play," making of man a "wisp in the wind" (Carrie, 74).

As previously mentioned, Hardy's world is frequently ruled by

chance. His plots, therefore, are marked in all periods of his career, by surprising concurrences of events which we may call coincidences. These coincidences are links in a chain of incidents working together against the possibility of happiness. Similarly, in Dreiser's world, there is "an accident or a series of accidents" which create the circumstance that brings about "an unfortunate sequence of events."[58]

In Sister Carrie, for example, it is significant that Dreiser is at so much pains to make the central incident in the novel: the safe clicking shut, happen by chance. Dreiser, we are told, "revised the safe scene several times. Even when the scene was firmly in his mind, he revised it again, getting the exact effect that he wanted."[59] It happens while Hurstwood is alone closing his saloon for the night and brooding over the dreadful day as his wife's lawyers threaten to file suit in court. By accident he realizes that the bar's safe has been left unlocked. As he glances idly inside, and sees the ten thousand dollars in ready cash, he wonders: "'I didn't know Fitzgerald and Moy ever left money this way'" (Carrie, 243). As it all seems the working of chance, "'they must have forgotten it'" (Carrie, 243), Hurstwood thinks. He removes the bills, then puts the money back, paces about the room with "wine ... in his veins" as Dreiser put it (Carrie, 243-244). "Surely no harm could come from looking at it!" (Carrie, 245). He takes the money from the safe again, decides he will abscond with it: "Why, he could live quietly with Carrie for years" (Carrie, 244). He goes so far as to stuff the money into his hand satchel intending to take it. Then he decides he will not do it. He thinks of the scandal, the police, of

himself a fugitive from justice! Prison bars! Faced by such prospects, he recoils. He lays the money back in the safe, is about to snap the door shut when he realizes the bills and change have been replaced in the wrong boxes. He lifts the boxes out and shifts the contents. While the money is in his hand the lock clicks. "It had sprung! Did he do it?" (Carrie, 246). It is obvious that Hurstwood, once he steals the money, becomes the victim of similar but less emphatic chance events which hurry him towards his decline, defeat and death. By doing so, Dreiser, I believe, has brought out an overwhelming sense of chance or fate which seems to dominate his whole novel, the primary victim of which is George Hurstwood.

In Jennie Gerhardt, too, chance seems to predominate. The novel starts with a chain of chance events which leads Jennie to her lonely end. Her relationship with Senator Brander could have been a quite harmless one if, by chance, Bass had not been caught stealing coal and arrested. When Jennie goes to Brander for help, she conceives Vesta. While she is pregnant, Brander dies unexpectedly of typhoid in Washington before he can fulfil his promise of marriage, and Jennie is left "in the enormous grip of chance" (Jennie, 86). "Why this sudden intrusion of death to shatter all that had seemed promising in life?", the author questions (Jennie, 83).

Again, the forces of chance and accident are at work to "seize and overwhelm one as does a great wind" (Jennie, 83). Chance, this time, strikes with Mr.Gerhardt burning his hands seriously in a factory accident, and Jennie feels obliged again to sacrifice herself, and this

time it is Lester Kane who finds her. Love binds them closely together, and their relationship would have surely turned out differently if Louise, Lester's sister, did not chance to visit her brother before her father's death and discover that Lester and Jennie are living together. This, as we know, causes Archibald Kane's wrath over Lester, and his will later necessitates that Lester and Jennie part, Lester to marry Letty Pace Gerald, and Jennie to go back to her home and live a life of loneliness and despair. Similar chance events in Dreiser's later novels, like the Chicago fire in The Financier, and the pregnancy of Roberta Alden in An American Tragedy, bring about an unfortunate sequence of events resulting-in An American Tragedy - in Clyde's execution. It seems clear that Dreiser must have found in Hardy a fictional universe confirming his own deterministic ideas, encouraging him to create his own tragedies of yearnings, tragedies of unsophisticated protagonists seeking the ideal, yet trapped and defeated in a Spencerian world ruled by "dark forces moving aimlessly" beyond their control.

A major point of difference between Hardy and Dreiser is that Hardy is a regional whereas Dreiser is a city novelist. Wessex with its southwest counties of England: Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon, Dorset and Cornwall, - where all Hardy's novels are set - is a vast stretch of agricultural and pastoral country dotted with heath and woodland rolling down to a rugged rocky sea coast. And in the minds of most readers the first association of the word Wessex is with Hardy's name. In Dreiser, the setting is not a lush valley of

dairies, or a barren and wild heath, or woods and orchards, or even a farmland and undulating downs; the setting in all his novels is the sprawling cities of Chicago and New York. Hardy and Dreiser, however, seem to have viewed the city from the same perspective.

To see Hardy as a regional novelist and consider his contribution to the regional novel as a genre, requires an understanding of what the regional novel is. Phyllis Bentley, in her brief pamphlet, The English Regional Novel, defines the regional novel as "the national novel carried to one degree further of subdivision; it is a novel which, concentrating on a particular part, a particular region of a nation, depicts the life of that region in such a way that the reader is conscious of the characteristics which are unique to that region and differentiate it from others in the common motherland."[60] Richard Brinkley, in his useful pamphlet Thomas Hardy as a Regional Novelist gives the regional novel the same definition: "the regional novel describes a particular area so as to show the reader the peculiarities which distinguish the life, landscape and settlements of that area from those of other districts. It springs from local peculiarities as a national literature springs from a national way of life; both are characteristic of the society and locality which inspire them."[61] Within this definition, one can argue that Hardy is a regional novelist because his novels relate to the lives, customs and traditions of a people in a particular stretch of country known as Wessex. However, to define Hardy as a regional novelist we have to consider the constituent elements of the regional novel as a genre - the character, plot, setting and theme.

Hardy's characters are regional because they are associated with their locality. This locality obliges them to follow certain crafts and occupations of the fields and heaths characteristic of this area - occupations like sheep-rearing, furze-cutting, timber-growing, milking, harvesting and the keeping of pigs. They are thus regional because, on the one hand, they are closely bound to the fields and the life therein, and on the other, they depend for their livelihood on the Wessex soil from which they cannot be dissociated.

As the characters are regional, the plot element of the novels takes on a regional colouring. All events, for example, in The Return of the Native spring in some way from Egdon Heath. All the incidents or episodes of the story are closely linked with the local events which influence the action of the novel such as the celebration for November the Fifth with which the action begins, or the "gipsying" and Christmas mumming play at Bloom's-End. Two such events mark two stages in the relationship between Eustacia Vye and Clym Yeobright. Soon after the news of Yeobright's return has reached Egdon, some of the heathfolk come to Eustacia's house to build a stack of furze-faggots for winter fuel. The house is remote and since Eustacia's grandfather cannot perform this task himself, some of the heath-dwellers come to his help. Eustacia overhears their conversation about Clym Yeobright. She is fascinated by what she hears and can think of little but Yeobright. A similar event brings them closer together. Eustacia and her grandfather are without drinking water because their bucket has fallen down the well and they are far from the nearest house. Clym Yeobright is one of the people who come to try get the bucket out of the

well. He meets Eustacia, whom he already knows, and they are mutually attracted; the relationship begun on this occasion leads on their marriage. It is to escape Egdon that Eustacia marries Clym Yeobright and later turns to Wildeve. Her antagonism towards Egdon is the ultimate cause of the break-up of her marriage with Clym, and later her death; the heath is, therefore, an essential part of the action, and the story could not have taken place except within this piece of Wessex.

The setting of the regional novel is often the most regional element in it. Hardy's presentation of his locality is comprehensive and detailed. On the one hand, Hardy made this presentation vivid for the reader by means of careful and frequent description: the heath, the pasture, the forest, the ploughland, the valley and coast and hills of Wessex, have all entered the landscape of English literature through the medium of his descriptive passages. On the other hand, he also illuminated Wessex from the economic, historical and social points of view.

Although the characters, plot, and setting of the regional novel are important, they are incidental to its theme, which is the aspect of life the novelist seeks to present and exemplify. "Hardy's themes" as Miss Bentley points out "are not regional" because "the aspect of life which he habitually wishes to present is a certain view of the workings of the universe as they affect humanity."[62] In other words, the theme of Hardy's novels, as we have already noted, is always the relationship between human beings and the Fate which controls their lives; a view of

man in relation to the universe. This theme of the relationship between man and the universe and the destiny which controls him is in no sense regional. Yet in a perhaps characteristically English manner, Hardy found the regional novel a suitable medium for exemplifying this theme. In his novels the local and the universal complement each other perfectly, and the attention of the reader is successfully focused upon a certain aspect of human life in general by detailed reference to the life of a particular local society.

Hardy is of great importance in the development of the English regional novel. He is, one can say, the first English novelist to produce a series of novels all focusing upon a particular locality. His great and peculiar contribution to English literature lies in the fact that he raised regional fiction to a much higher level than it had hithero attained. In this respect, he far exceeded his predecessors such as George Eliot in her vivid presentation of the features and character of a particular region and in her wide-ranging and detailed presentation of a local scene. The success of Hardy's novels encouraged a score of lesser writers to follow his example and plan a series of novels deliberately presenting the life of a particular locality, - writers such as Arnold Bennett and Sheila Kaye-Smith, and perhaps even D.H.Lawrence.

As Hardy raised regional fiction to a much higher level, and as he is of great importance in the development of the regional genre in English literature, Dreiser on the other hand is considered "the generic

novelist of twentieth-century city fiction"[63] in American literature. "Other novelists of his time shared some of his isolated insights into the meaning of city life, {but} none had gone through the total experience of discovery that gave Dreiser an inclusive and immediate knowledge of the modern city."[64]

Dreiser's knowledge of the modern city came first through his real participation in city life; second through his newspaper and reporting experience; and third through his reading of Balzac. His participation in the city's struggles brought him into contact with the ugly realities of city life, first in the long days of job-hunting and then in the job he did finally find. Working as dishwasher, laundry-driver, rent-collector, he was forced to observe the sordidness of the city, to see its "pimps and prostitutes, dope fiends and drunkards," and to "sympathize with the unsatisfied dreams of {its} people."[65] During these days of job-hunting his consciousness of urban realities was growing; later he wrote that "the keen appreciation of the storms and stress of life that later may have manifested itself in my writings was then being forced on me. For so often I was touched by the figures of other seekers like myself and Al {his brother} - their eyes, worn faces, bodies, clothes, the weariness of them in line at so many doors! As a matter of fact, this was but the beginning of a long observation of the struggles and fortunes of man."[66] Added to this personal experience, his newspaper and reporting life - very much in the tradition of Defoe and Dickens - taught him much and greatly extended his knowledge of the city. In St. Louis, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and New York his newspaper duties not only forced him into

contact with the lowest and most sordid elements of society, they forced him, too, to describe these elements fully and accurately. As his newspaper experience contributed to his emergence as city novelist, so it also developed a willingness to describe the dark and unhappy side of much of modern life. Thus Dreiser was steeled to deal with the tragic aspects of American life. Finally while first reading Balzac, Dreiser was overwhelmed, as will be detailed next.

In 1894, while working as a reporter for the Pittsburgh Dispatch Dreiser was assigned to cover the Allegheny city hall. Frequently finding himself with little to do, he began browsing in the nearby Carnegie Public Library. One afternoon he came upon a shelf of Balzac's works, and, recalling the repeated urgings of H.P.Wandell, his old editor at the St. Louis Republic, to "remember Zola and Balzac,"[67] he casually picked up Balzac's The Wild Ass's Skin.[68] Immediately, Dreiser was overpowered by Balzac's presentation of Parisian life:

> A new and inviting door to life had been suddenly thrown open to me. Here was one who saw, thought, felt. Through him I saw a prospect so wide that it left me breathless - all Paris, all France, all life through French eyes. Here was one who had a tremendous and sensitive grasp of life, philosophic, tolerant, patient, amused. At once I was personally identified with his Raphael, his Rastignac, his Bixiou, Bianchon. ... Balzac grasped life and invented themes whereby to present it, but for the fact that the types he handled with most enthusiasm and skill - the brooding, seeking, ambitious beginner in life's social, political, artistic and commercial affairs ... were, I thought, so much like myself. Indeed, later taking up and

> consuming almost at a sitting the Great Man From the Provinces, Pere Goriot, Cousin Pons, Cousin Bette, it was so easy to identify myself with the young and seeking aspirants.[69]

Perhaps the most significant effect Balzac had on Dreiser as a writer was to make him see that life in the great American cities was worthy of serious literary treatment. He found in Balzac's Paris much that reminded him of Pittsburgh:

> ... I marvelled at the physical similarity of the two cities as I conceived it, at the chance for pictures here as well as there. American pictures here, as opposed to French pictures there. ... For a period of four or five months I ate, slept, dreamed, lived him and his characters and his views and his city.[70]

In 1911, Dreiser told an interviewer that in Balzac he saw "for the first time how a book should be written. I saw how, if I ever wrote one I would write it."[71] Hence, a few years later, when Dreiser set out to write his first book, he must have undoubtedly felt he was an American Balzac recording life in the great cities of America, cities peopled with characters very much like Balzac's and very much like himself. Balzac's novels of Paris thus left an overwhelming impression upon Dreiser's sensibilities. More important, they suggested to him the use of the city as material for fiction. As he contrasted Balzac's Paris with the vital world about him, he became convinced that Pittsburgh had as much to offer the American novelist in inspiration and material as Paris had offered the French master.

Thus after reading Balzac and observing that life was grim and sad, haphazard, casual and cruel,[72] and recognizing a sense of

helplessness in the great city which grew out of his own experience of defeat, he envisioned man as a helpless creature set against a background of a cruel and chaotic world. These observations and disillusioning experiences provided Dreiser with enough literary material, and as they matured, Dreiser embarked on writing his first novel.

Indeed, with the publication of Sister Carrie, "the twentieth-century American city novel came into being," because, "while other novels of the time showed insight into modern city life, none combined the major urban themes, attitudes, and moods to create a new kind of fiction that clearly broke with nineteenth-century literary tradition."[73] Sister Carrie, then, created the twentieth-century American city novel. It brought a coherent vision of city life, and, moreover, it embodied an empirical approach to urban life. It showed an intrinsic interest in the city, in urban character types, urban atmosphere, moods, tensions and structures. More important, it was concerned with the impact of urbanism as a way of life: it traced the personal implications of materialism, economic inequality, and social indifference as these were peculiarly evident in the urban experience. Most significantly of all, in dealing with the thwarting of the desire for beauty, love, happiness and fulfilment, Dreiser's city novel revealed man's essential helplessness in an overpowering and alien world. In this respect, very much like Hardy's regional novel, Dreiser's city novel explored successfully a peculiar pattern of tragic defeat. Just as Hardy is the

first English regional novelist who produced a series of novels all focusing upon a particular locality, Dreiser, then, is the generic novelist of twentieth-century American city fiction who produced a series of novels whose settings were the sprawling cities of Philadelphia, Chicago and New York. Despite this difference in locality or setting Dreiser's Carries and Jennies are as sensitive and tragic as any Tess milking a cow or chopping turnips. In other words, Hardy's discovery of his region and Dreiser's discovery of the city parallel each other. Both contain a similar pattern, a similar working out of human destiny. In both authors that destiny is tragic, leading in Hardy to death and in Dreiser to inner defeat.

Despite this difference between the two authors in localities, both, as earlier mentioned, seem to have viewed the city from the same perspective. For Hardy, in at least two of his novels the city stands as an object of wonder, beauty, experience and yearning, quite suggestive of the role it plays in Sister Carrie. Eustacia Vye, for example, in The Return of the Native, is much like Carrie. She is gloomy on the surface but possesses a strain of strong passion. Having once experienced the life of the city, she is tormented by the dreariness of Egdon Heath, and she desires a passionate love "which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days" (The Native, 92). When she turns from Wildeve to Clym Yeobright, she does so because he has come from "the centre and vortex of the fashionable world" - Paris (The Native, 130). He is "laden with its atmosphere, familiar with its charms" (The Native, 136). She loves him only because he offers her access to the city and what it represents, "what is called

life-music, poetry, passion, war, and all the beating and pulsing that are going in the great arteries of the world" (The Native, 351).

Despite obvious differences, Jude Fawley possesses the same yearning for beauty and experience. Again the central symbol of this yearning is the city - Christminster, with its ancient university. Always Jude sees Christminster in terms of light and dreams. When he first views it from the top of the barn near Marygreen with the sun's dying beams "streaming out in visible lines between two bars of a slaty cloud," he cannot tell if it is "directly seen, or miraged in the peculiar atmosphere" (Jude, 19). Through his youth, "dreams ... gigantic as his surroundings were small" sustain him, and the city is viewed by him with an artist's craving for beauty: "Through the solid barrier of cold cretaceous upland to the northward he was always beholding a gorgeous city - the fancied place he had likened to the New Jerusalem, though there was perhaps more of the painter's imagination and less of the diamond merchant's in his dream thereof ..." (Jude, 20).

Jude sees in his poetic conception of the city the source of happiness; he hears the distant bells calling, "' we are happy here!'" (Jude, 21). In expressing Jude's feelings about Christminster, Hardy relies on the language of romantic love: "He was getting so romantically attached to Christminster that, like a young lover alluding to his mistress, he felt bashful at mentioning its name again. He pointed to the light in the sky..." (Jude, 21). Finally, as Paris is

for Eustacia Vye, Christminster represents for Jude life and experience: "It is a city of light ... the tree of knowledge grows there" (Jude, 23).

Dreiser's description of the city combines elements of Balzac's Paris as seductive whore and Hardy's Paris and Christminster as a lover offering light, beauty, and experience:

> the gleam of a thousand lights is often as effective as the persuasive light in a wooing and fascinating eye. ... A blare of sound,a roar of life, a vast array of human hives, appeal to the astonished senses in equivocal terms. ... Unrecognized for what they are, their beauty, like music, too often relaxes then weakens, then perverts the simpler human perceptions (Carrie, 8).

As Carrie approaches Chicago for the first time, she feels the pulsing of "forces wholly superhuman" (Carrie, 8), and as the train rides into the "great city" Carrie's "wonder" is stirred (Carrie, 13). She begins to dream "wild dreams of some vague, far-off supremacy" (Carrie, 8) there in "the ways and the hosts of the merry" where "the streets, the lamps, the lighted chamber set for dining, are for me. The theatre, the halls, the parties, the ways of rest and the paths of song" (Carrie, 13). Are all these things really for Carrie? As Pizer indicates, Dreiser is successful in establishing the city as "a symbol of experience, and to the innocent it symbolizes above all the wonder of experience, of life, which lies before them. It seems to promise happiness, beauty, excitement, if one only tastes of the apple."[74] Carrie, like Jude, is especially vulnerable to such a lure

because of her deep-feeling, melancholy nature which makes her want desperately to escape the "drag of a lean and narrow life" (Carrie, 17), which makes her one of "the poets and dreamers-artists" (Carrie, 460).

Despite the fact that Hardy and Dreiser viewed the city as an object of wonder, beauty, experience and yearning, they also saw it as a walled city, against whose proud gates a new comer may pound in vain for admission. Most aspirants fail to gain entry. Jude, although a dreamer like Carrie discovers that the city of life has walls difficult to scale or breach:

> It was not till now, when he found himself actually on the spot of his enthusiasm, that Jude perceived how far away from the object of that enthusiasm he really was. Only a wall divided him from those happy young contemporaries of his ... Only a wall - but what a wall!... For the present he was outside the gates of everything, colleges included: perhaps some day he would be inside. Those palaces of light and leading; he might some day look down on the world through their panes (Jude, 70-71).

Jude is never to get to the inner city that contains the life he desires, and near the end of the novel he passes true judgment on himself: "'Well - I'm an outsider to the end of my days!'" (Jude, 259). Fittingly, Jude the outsider, dies alone while all the rest of Christminster is caught up in the frivolity of the Remembrance Days games.

Similarly, after Hurstwood has "severed himself from the past as by a sword" (Carrie, 268), he also discovers what it is to be outside

of life:

> He began to see as one sees a city with a wall about it. Men were posted at the gates. You could not get in. Those inside did not care to come out to see who you were. They were so merry inside there that all those outside were forgotten, and he was on the outside (Carrie, 306).

In his last days, even Carrie forgets him when she is caught up in "the hurry of departure" (Carrie, 442) for a new engagement. Just as Jude's lonely death is juxtaposed with the unthinking gaiety of Christminster, so is Hurstwood's suicide presented in conjunction with the three vignettes of Carrie, Drouet and the Hurstwood family who pursue their various pleasures oblivious to his suffering.

Finally, to bring this chapter to a close, we have to consider both authors as realists. So far as the aim of the realist is to see life as it is, the true realists, then, are such writers as Hardy for English rural life, and Dreiser for life in the great cities of America. Henry MacArthur in his Realism and Romance and Other Essays, summarizes the distinguishing marks of the realist school as follows:

> 1. That it keeps to the present day, and aims at keeping within the limits of the possible.
>
> 2. That it depends for its interest on character rather than on incident.
>
> 3. That in its manner and choice of subjects it is bold and unconventional; and that it deals freely with certain aspects of life hitherto untouched or very gingerly handled.

4. That it aims at painting real men and women, not ideal men and women.[75]

The field in which Hardy has chosen to work is the south-western corner of England, what in the days of the Saxons was known as Wessex. Wessex is the world in which he grew up, the familiar world of fields and woods and farms, the homely figure of the peasants, and the sweeping panoramas of valleys, streams and downs. This for him is not a mere outward show; it is not to be a mere scene and setting to give extrinsic ornament to a tale. This Wessex country, even if on occasion it is presented in a heightened form transcending any kind of documentary realism, is for him the home of the earth-born, the place which has moulded the lives of countless generations who have grown up under the shadow of the same hills and been awed by the same mysteries they contain. The man born and bred in such a place has a living awareness of past generations.

Hardy's best work deals with the lives of those humble and obscure persons in that district whose feet have traversed the fields; whose creaking plough has turned those sods from time to time; whose hands planted the trees that form a crest to the opposite hill; and whose horses and hounds have torn through that underwood. And as Hardy's entire childhood was spent close to the soil, he was in every sense a child of the Wessex country. He knows the country intimately, and we feel that the rustic figures who cross his pages are drawn from the life. He paints them as they are, with their quaint and old-world ways, - even though hints of unintended caricature may occasionally creep in.

Round the lives of these simple peasants Hardy weaves his striking stories of love and passion and suffering. In sheer tragic power he has scarcely an equal whether among his contemporaries or among the writers of today. His greatest books, The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure, are all cast in a tragic mould. His best drawn characters are often those who are close to the soil and whose ends are tragic, whose lot is to suffer and die. In this sense his sad philosophy rings as true as his English yeomen or his picture of Egdon Heath. "It was not possible for him to write propaganda," Merryn Williams writes, "only to record the facts as he felt them and knew them."[76] Hardy then, as Fergal Mcgrath points out "in all the best senses of the word is one of the greatest realists that ever put pen to paper."[77] His greatness, I believe, comes from the fact that he has thus far seen life truly and has had genius, courage and skill to picture it honestly and vividly as he has seen it. Above all, he has succeeded in achieving what neither Sophocles nor Shakespeare ever attempted, or as far as one knows, would have thought of attempting. For he has written of the common lives of common men; he has brought tragedy down from the princes and their courts of elder days to live among the ignorant, the obscure, and the mediocre. True, he has not been the first to discover the sufferings of the lowlier sons of earth, and he has not been the first to feel them sympathetically, but he has, most notably among English writers, succeeded in doing what long had been impossible, in giving them tragic significance.

Similarly, Dreiser's purpose as a novelist was merely to portray life as he saw it. To register the truth is presumably the aim of all artists, but Dreiser's view was that the best mode of getting at the truth was by the accurate reporting of every day reality. In a foreward to the first published bibliography of his works, Dreiser commented upon his work thus:

> On thinking over the books I have written I can only say ... {that I have had a} vision of life - life with its romance and cruelty, its pity and terror, its joy and anxiety, its peace and conflict. You may not like my vision ... but it is the only one I have seen and felt, and, therefore, it is the only one I can give you.[78]

This was the position he took all his life: the chief purpose of the artist is to present his imaginative reconstruction of life as he saw it truthfully. This was the core of his idea of realism and he stated it quite categorically at the beginning of his career:

> the sum and substance of literary as well as social morality may be expressed in three words - tell the truth. It matters not how the tongues of critics may wag, or the voices of a partially developed and highly conventionalized society may complain, the business of the author ... is to say what he knows to be true, and having said as much, to abide the result with patience. Truth is what is; and the seeing of what is, the realization of truth. To express what we see honestly and without subterfuge: This is morality as well as art.[79]

Furthermore, the "scope of fiction," he asserted should be determined by the author in accordance with his individual point of view; the

writer of fiction must "interpret life as it appeals to him or not at all." His own preference was for realistic literature: "I am for the type of fiction that confines its attempted interpretations to not only the possibilities, but the probabilities and I have no reading patience with anything that does not compel me by the charm of its verisimilitude."[80]

As he tried to create a realistic literature, he broke current traditions, and, as Sinclair Lewis put it, he "cleared the trail from Victorian Howellsian timidity and gentility in American fiction to honesty and boldness and passion of life."[81] In Chicago, Saint Louis, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Buffalo and New York he had found the real world as vivid and intense as he hoped to make the fictional; and he felt - some critics would argue wrongly - no need to impose an elaborate aesthetic form upon his material. His literary picture of the city is illuminated by an analysis of the impact of urban existence upon his own mind and feelings. The material of his art was based, as was his philosophy of life, upon experience. His novels re-create the city he had discovered in a journey that took him from callow youth to maturity, from illusion to reality.

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Chapter II

i

Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Sister Carrie

As previously mentioned in Chapter One, Dreiser did read Hardy, but there is no way of knowing how much. Dreiser may even have been influenced more by a minor work than by one of Hardy's acknowledged masterpieces. Dreiser does however mention Tess of the d'Urbervilles in the holograph of Sister Carrie. In the holograph Ames recommends Hardy to Carrie, and when Mrs.Vance comments that she had found Tess too sad a story, Ames replies that one has to "feel the pathetic side of life" to respond properly to the novel.[1]

The fact is that critics seldom discuss Sister Carrie in relation to Hardy, although H.L.Mencken did note a resemblance between Dreiser's book and Jude the Obscure.[2] Several critics have, however, pointed out the resemblance between Tess of the d'Urbervilles and the later Jennie Gerhardt. Though Jennie Gerhardt was not published until 1911, Dreiser began writing it almost immediately after he finished Sister Carrie. The Hardysque theme of the fallen woman whose natural goodness keeps her "Pure", which Dreiser fully develops in Jennie Gerhardt, is clearly foreshadowed in Sister Carrie. Hardy's influence on Dreiser's first book has been overlooked probably because Sister Carrie is a city novel

and seems on the surface closer to Balzac's novels of Parisian life. This study, however, is going to show first the similarity between Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Sister Carrie, then, between Tess and Jennie.

Carrie Meeber can be equated with the more deeply tragic heroes and heroines of Thomas Hardy. Hurstwood, in the same novel, in his decline and death resembles Hardy's lonely outcasts, specifically Michael Henchard. Carrie herself has the dreaminess of Jude and the natural vitality of Tess, and like Tess she is a child of nature. Indeed, Dreiser seems to have found much in Hardy that helped shape his first novel, and, moreover, internal and external evidence points to Hardy as a significant influence on Sister Carrie.

In the first place, for many people in the late nineteenth century, the theory of evolution challenged their conception of man's relationship to nature. Man was relegated to a position within the unfolding struggle for survival. When Hardy wrote his novels, his treatment of nature reflected this changed attitude. David Cecil has noted that "Nature ... played a larger part in his books than in those of any other English novelist. It is not just the background in his drama, but a leading character in it."[3] J.H.Miller has concluded that Hardy's use of nature "goes beyond direct or ironic echoing at a distance" and that in his novels man "participates in natural rhythms and is subject to them." Miller analyses Tess of the d'Urbervilles and asserts that "by way of their bodies and in particular their sexual desires men and women are part of nature driven by the same energies which lead to the growth of plants and animals."[4]

Tess is much like a plant; from the time Alec d'Urbervilles heaps flowers on her in his efforts to seduce her[5] she is equated with plants particularly flowers. She is "quite a posy"[6] or a "sapling... transplanted to a deeper soil" (Tess, 109), and when Angel Clare woos her, "the ardour of his affection" is "so palpable that she seemed to flinch under it like a plant in too burning a sun" (Tess, 144). In such a world, "a field-woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her own margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it" (Tess, 74). The lovers' passion deepens as summer progresses from the humid days when they are "converging, under an irresistible law, as surely as two streams in one vale" (Tess, 109) to hot dry August: "And as Clare was oppressed by the outward heats, so was he burdened inwardly by waxing fervour of passion for the soft and silent Tess " (Tess, 125).

In this world, changes in the seasons mark and determine changes in human life. It is in the idyllic beauty of the May dance that we first see Tess when Angel Clare passes and halts to join in the dance. It is in the almost unearthly beauty of summer at Talbothays that Tess meets Angel again and the wooing begins. When love is lost, and when the season turns, their sad parting takes place in winter under weeping trees and by mourning streams. It is in the same winter that Tess suffers her rejection and sorrow at the "starve acre" farm at Flintcomb-Ash, where "the air was dry and cold, and the long cart-roads were blown white and dusty within a few hours after rain" (Tess, 234). Here Tess, her own face denuded by her grief, toils in a barren field, itself" a complexion without features, as if a face, from chin to brow,

should be only an expanse of skin. The sky wore, in another colour, the same likeness; a white vacuity of countenance with the lineaments gone" (Tess, 237). Between these two blank faces is emptiness, except for Tess and her friend Marian, "two girls crawling over the surface ... like flies" (Tess, 238). Finally, it is on the stone of sacrifice at Stonehenge that Tess has her last rest and her last happiness before the grim servants of the law close in.

Dreiser too had discovered in Spencer and others that man was only another manifestation of the forces that cause the sun to shine, the earth to move, the seasons to change and the flowers to grow. In Hardy he saw the possibilities of using such ideas as basic structural principles in a novel. His setting, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is not a lush valley of dairies, or a barren heath - it is the sprawling cities of Chicago and New York. But his characters are as sensitive to the fluctuations in natural cycles as any Tess milking a cow or chopping turnips. Carrie, like Tess, is an unsophisticated country girl who is often associated with a blooming plant. For example, of Carrie's unhappiness at the Hansons and in the shoe factory Dreiser says:

> Transplantation is not always successful in the matters of flowers or maidens. It requires sometime a richer soil, a better atmosphere to continue even a natural growth. It would have been better if her acclimatization had been more gradual - less rigid.[7]

Shortly thereafter, Drouet "the essence of sunshine," runs into the cold and lonely Carrie, whom he addresses as "a daisy" (Carrie, 58), and whom he offers the richer soil and better atmosphere she requires.

Like Tess, Carrie's story, as well as Hurstwood's, is structured largely by the cycle of the seasons. The story progresses from the hopeful summer of Carrie's arrival in Chicago through her distressful winter of labour and toil, to the springtime and summer romance with Hurstwood. The second half of the novel, depicting Hurstood's decline, is dominated by winter; Hurstwood's unsuccessful job hunting, the strike, the curious shifts of the Bowery bums, Hurstwood's suicide - all are set against a background of darkness and cold. If there is any relief from the effects of winter cold that "strikes to the heart of all life, animate and inanimate," it is only in "the artificial fires of merriment" (Carrie, 91) that can distract us, or in fleeting human contact that provides a temporary substitute for natural warmth. One is reminded of Hardy's explanation for the lighting of fires on Guy Fawkes Day, which he presents more as a symbolic attempt to protect mankind against the approaching cold of winter than as a historical commemoration:

> Moreover to light a fire is the instinctive and resistant act of man when, at the winter ingress, the curfew is sounded throughout Nature. It indicates a spontaneous, Promethean rebelliousness against the fiat that this recurrent season shall bring foul times, cold darkness, misery and death. Black chaos comes, and the fettered gods of the earth say, Let there be light.[8]

So important does the turn of the seasons become to the events of the narrative and to the fates of Carrie and Hurstwood that each is rarely seen except in relation to a fitting season. Pizer concludes that this emphasis on seasons leads to "an effect of timelessness": "As in the opening Chapters of the novel, change is primarily emotional change and appears to occur within a permanent distinctive season. Hurstwood's collapse exists in a timeless winter landscape, and Carrie's life in the Elfland of the theatre is set against a backdrop of spring."[9] Ellen Moers in her Two Dreisers has also emphasized Dreiser's use of nature, particularly in the restaurant scene wherein Drouet first overcomes Carrie's resistance by the warmth of his personality. She calls Dreiser's images of warmth and vegetable growth" one of those mysteriously casual interactions of creature with environment that roused in Dreiser the emotions of wonder and awe."[10]

The fact is that Tess and Carrie are both seduced country girls. Tess has no desire to rise higher above her station than to be a school-teacher, and her most distinguishing characteristic is self-sacrifice: she goes to seek help from the d'Urbervilles and returns to Alec at the end of the novel only to help her family. Always giving up her own happiness and comfort for others, Tess may well seem far different from the young Carrie, for whom self-interest is the guiding characteristic.

There is still, however, at the heart of Tess's personality much that may have influenced Dreiser's presentation of Carrie, as well as more obviously his characterization of Jennie Gerhardt shortly

afterwards. In the Talbothays dairy section is the image of Tess as a manifestation of "unexpended youth, surging up anew after its temporary check, and bringing with it hope, and the invincible instinct towards self-delight" (Tess, 85). At a time when circumstances suggest that Tess will face a life of toil and penance for her loss of innocence, Hardy chooses to show in her the "irresistible, universal, automatic tendency to find sweet pleasure somewhere, which pervades all life" (Tess, 88). Her past experience may have led to a moodiness which Hardy calls "the ache of modernism" (Tess, 105), and Tess has to struggle, on the one hand, against this social sadness, and on the other, she tries out of conscience, "to lead a repressed life, but she little divined the strength of her own vitality" (Tess, 106). "Vitality", "youth", "hope", "sweet pleasure" - these are all morally positive terms for the force which is operating in Tess to allow her to survive the blow she has suffered.

The search for pleasure in Hardy is equated with natural vitality. Furthermore, Hardy makes it clear that this vitality in his "Pure" heroine is inseparable from sexual desire. Tess becomes caught up in her love for Angel Clare, an emotion which Hardy describes in the other milkmaids as "thrust on them by cruel Nature's law - an emotion which they had neither expected nor desired. ... {E}ach was but portion of one organism called sex" (Tess, 124).

Hardy wants us to feel that Tess is truly what Angel first takes her to be - "a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature" (Tess, 102). She may be part of the "organism called sex," but Hardy insists that sex is

only "the 'appetite for joy' which pervades all creation, that tremendous force which sways humanity to its purpose, as the tide sways the helpless weed" and which "was not to be controlled by vague lucubration over the social rubric" (Tess, 161). Sex, therefore, is elevated from an animalistic desire for gratification to a larger, universal and hence moral desire for happiness. Ironically, this desire is often cruel, in that it goes unfulfilled (as with the suffering milkmaids), or is repressed by social convention (as with Tess). Tess struggles in vain, and the conflict between social convention, which demands a life of penance, and her desire for happiness leads to a life "distinctly twisted of two strands, positive pleasure and positive pain" (Tess, 148). Youth and vitality triumph in Tess, and she marries Angel, who, because of his deep-rooted conventionality, rejects her as "the belated seedling of an effete aristocracy" (Tess, 195). Thus hope and desire for happiness lead ironically to her pain, suffering and death.

The irony of this situation may be behind Ames's assertion in the holograph that only those who respond to "the pathetic side of life" would be affected by Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Certainly Dreiser responded, and in his own novel he attempted to get the reader to view Carrie's desires as similarly natural and good. The objects of Carrie's desires are frequently not elevating; however, Dreiser at several points indicates that behind these desires is youthful hopefulness. Carrie responds to Hurstwood largely because he, like Clym Yeobright, represents a life of greater pleasure and beauty. To overcome the reader's disapproval of this illicit relationship, Dreiser comments: "Oh, blessed are the children of endeavour in this, that they try and

are hopeful. And blessed also are they who, knowing, smile and approve" (Carrie, 162). Later, when Carrie has partially yielded to Hurstwood on the train to Montreal because he offers her relief from an impending life of dreary toil, Dreiser again tries to present desire as something innately moral:

> It was an interesting world to her. Her life has just begun. She did not feel herself defeated at all. Neither was she blasted in hope. The great city held much. Possibly ... she would be happy. These thoughts raised her above the level of erring. She was saved in that she was hopeful (Carrie, 260).

Carrie wants to flaunt beautiful clothes on Broadway, and behind these materialistic yearnings is always the thought, "Ah, then she would be happy!" (Carrie, 289).

Sex as the essence of youthful desire is not central to Sister Carrie; nonetheless, Carrie does have two sexual affairs. Behind Dreiser's assertion that "the first principles of morals" lie in the thrill of the human heart, "some plaintive note" heard throughout the world, or in "the rose's subtle alchemy" (Carrie, 89) is Hardy's presentation of "A Pure Woman". In Dreiser's images of emotion, music, and the blooming of a flower, sex merges into youthful desires for beauty and youthful vitality, both of which are universal and moral. Carrie is as "hopeful" as Tess, - the difference is only that she lives in a world in which neither her own "average little conscience" (Carrie, 91) nor the sanctions of society are as destructive as they are for Tess Durbeyfield. But the question is, was Carrie really happy by the end?

The answer is simply no because Carrie suspects that "the door to life's perfect enjoyment was not open." She learns the "impotence" of money to bring happiness (Carrie, 421), and becomes "reserved", and of "self-withdrawing temper" (Carrie, 442). Dreiser, however, will not allow Carrie the resignation of Tess. By refusing to allow her to reach a full realization of the futility of life, he maintains in her some of the natural hope and vitality of the young Tess. And in her continuing search for "the peace and beauty which glimmered afar off", and the radiance of "the delight which tints the distant hilltops of the world" (Carrie, 461-462), there is perhaps some of Dreiser's own refusal to accept that we will never be happier than we are now.

In Sister Carrie, however, Dreiser tried to give the Balzacian situation of the young protagonist in the city some of the tragic significance he found in Hardy's version of the same story. Carrie, like Jude, is a dreamer and wants beauty and happiness on higher and higher levels. Like Tess, she is part of the natural cycle, and Dreiser like Hardy, uses this cycle as a major structural element. In addition, Dreiser tries to get the reader to accept Carrie's fall as the result of the same sense of youthful hope and vitality that drives Tess. If Carrie does not seem as tragic as Tess, or Jude, it is because as has just been mentioned, Dreiser will not allow her either the resignation of Tess or Jude, or grant her the tragic potential and the moral insight of Hardy's heroes. In Hurstwood, however, there is much of the same human dignity in great suffering that Hardy presents in the tragic decline and death of Michael Henchard.

Hardy gives Henchard an extraordinary capacity to suffer and a selfless nobility which stays with him to the end. He may think and feel that his spirit is completely crushed, but the reader never feels this way. Henchard's innate decency prevents him from carrying out impulsive, vengeful acts, such as exposing Lucetta as his past mistress or hurling Farfrae from the barn loft after defeating him in a fair fight. Henchard's stoicism, unlike Hurstwood's, is also admirable; when the return of Newson deprives him of his last source of happiness, he declares, "'I - Cain - go alone as I deserve - an outcast and a vagabond. But my punishment is not greater than I can bear'" (The Mayor, 239). Feeling the justice of his punishment, he no longer cries out against the gods or fate. When Elizabeth-Jane, on the day of her wedding to Farfrae, rejects his final effort at reconciliation, he will not plead his case because "he did not sufficiently value himself to lessen his sufferings by strenuous appeal or elaborate argument" (The Mayor, 250). The dignity with which he walks away from his last hope for life makes him of much more worth in the reader's eye than in his own.

The Quest for the Ideal

One of the structural principles at the heart of Hardy's novels is what we may call a ladder of love: the evolution of Hardy's characters is largely defined by a hierarchical progression of love relationships moving from the sensual to the spiritual. In other words, Hardy's heroes typically are searching for a spiritual ideal, and this

search is usually symbolized in a series of hierarchical love relationships. If they fail or fall along the way, like Tess Durbeyfield, Hardy transforms their defeat into good by presenting it as the operation of irresistible natural vitality leading these heroes, who achieve spiritual and moral growth, to a tragic death.

In The Return of the Native, for example, Eustacia yearns for "the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover" (The Native, 92). In this way she is akin to Carrie, who is after the ideal rather than particular lovers. Eustacia first turns in her search to Wildeve, a "lady-killer" whose chief attraction is physical: "Altogether he was one in whom no man would have seen anything to admire, and in whom no woman would have anything to dislike "(The Native, 68). When she is sure of his love, however, her interest quickly wanes. Miller says of the typical Hardy lover:

> He moves in an ever renewed rhythm of desire and disgust in which he always turns to a new object of love as soon as he abandons the old. Such lovers love only when they do not possess what they desire, ceasing to love when they obtain what seemed to promise perpetual happiness. ... {T}he form of each novel is determined by the development of these loves.[11]

Dissatisfied with one person, Hardy's characters almost inevitably seek some-one new with higher moral and intellectual characteristics. Eustacia turns to Clym Yeobright, who is so superior to Wildeve that he is "like a man coming from heaven" (The Native, 130). Clym has renounced his career as a diamond merchant because it "was the idlest, vainest, most effeminate business that ever a man could be put to" (The

Native, 188). He wants to sacrifice wealth to help elevate the lives of the people of Egdon Heath, feeling he cannot prosper with "the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain" (The Native, 193).

The same kind of movement takes place in the other three novels being considered. Tess finds it difficult to love the stock villain Alec d'Urberville despite "the touches of barbarism in his contours", and the "singular force in ... his bold rolling eye" (Tess, 32). After her fall, Tess seeks the ethereal Angel Clare because she sees him "as an intelligence rather than as a man" (Tess, 106). As she begins to love him, he becomes "so godlike in her eyes" that "her nature cried for his tutelary guidance" (Tess, 153). Hardy assures us that "he was, in truth, more spiritual than animal" (Tess, 162). Jude's first love is Arabella, "a complete and substantial female animal," [12] but, soon disgusted with her grossness and vulgarity, he turns to Sue Bridehead, whom he sees as an "ideality" (Jude, 80), a "divinity" (Jude, 116), and the better he gets to know her, the more he uses whether in speech or thought, such terms as "ethereal", "incarnate" (Jude, 150), "aerial" (Jude, 172), "'spirit ... disembodied creature ... hardly flesh at all'" (Jude, 195). Moreover, she will be to him "a kindly star, an elevating power, a companion in Anglican worship, a tender friend" (Jude, 74). There is even a hint of the same pattern in Michael Henchard as he moves from the simple, almost bovine Susan to the superficial Lucetta and finally to a paternal love for the self-sacrificing Elizabeth-Jane. Lucetta, too, follows the same pattern, loving first the physical Henchard and then the intellectual

Farfrae.

These characters' desire for a higher life of spiritual and intellectual beauty, their growth in understanding, and their increasingly spiritual love relationships all suggest the possibility of progress toward perfection. We might conceive of this pattern as an upward movement toward the ideal. Yet in the background is always the suggestion that man is tragically caught in nature's cycle of life and death and that no achievement of the ideal is possible. Eustacia ceases to love Clym because she sees that he cannot offer the life of Paris, her old feelings for Wildeve are stirred, and in her ceaseless efforts to get to him she drowns during the wild storm on Egdon Heath. When Angel shows his narrow conventionality by rejecting Tess, she is forced to return to Alec to save her family, and this return leads directly to the murder of Alec and to Tess's execution. Jude's life draws to its lonely close with him again married to Arabella, who has seduced him again in his drunken grief over the loss of Sue. In The Mayor of Casterbridge, the returns first of Susan, then of the old furmity woman, and finally of Captain Newson are all living reminders of the sale of Susan Henchard, reminders which hasten Henchard's final deterioration and death. These returns, however, may suggest that the tragic heroes and heroines cannot escape what they are - weak, passionate creatures of base instincts and desires who must inevitably die. Whatever growth they may attain is insufficient to bring lasting happiness in a tragic world, and their failure is part of the universal tragic failure to transcend their own nature.

In Dreiser, this same structural pattern is basic to Sister Carrie. That Carrie's relationships with Drouet first, and later with Hurstwood, represent a moral and intellectual advance has been pointed out often enough to need little demonstration here. But while she does become a somewhat more complex, sophisticated better person, we are reminded by Hurstwood's death and by the recurring image of the rocking chair that, if the species evolves towards perfection, the individual at this stage of evolution often gets nowhere because of his innate human limitations. Growth towards the ideal turns out to be only a portion of the larger cycle leading to decay and death.

ii

Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jennie Gerhardt:

Unfulfilled Fallen Women

Despite the fact that Sister Carrie is, as we have seen, in some ways similar to Tess, Dreiser's later work bears more resemblance to that of Hardy. Hence critics have frequently suggested that Hardy influenced Dreiser's later works, particularly Jennie Gerhardt, published in 1911. But Jennie Gerhardt was already in the planning stages during the summer of 1900, while Dreiser was still bickering with Doubleday over Sister Carrie.[13] During that summer he wrote Henry Mencken about his next novel and refers to it as being more honest than Sister Carrie: "It will pay them to treat me fair. I shall not leave room for queries in my next. Those who have feelings may prepare to have them shaken. It shall come out of my heart truly."[14]

The major literary influence on Jennie Gerhardt was Tess of the d'Urbervilles and both novels have the similar theme that there is an absolute morality in the operation of natural, universal forces - that a fallen woman could be "A Pure Woman," as the sub-title of Tess puts it. This theme is clearly present in Sister Carrie, though not as fully developed as in the succeeding novel. When Dreiser began writing Jennie Gerhardt in January, 1901, he had Tess very much in mind, - as the references to Tess in the holograph of Sister Carrie indicate. So the purpose of this second part of this chapter is to trace the theme of the fallen woman in Tess and Jennie, and emphasize the fact that although both women are considered, from society's point of view, fallen, they are pure and their purity derives mainly from their natural goodness and self-sacrifice for others.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Hardy produced a tragic masterpiece which stands at the centre of his achievement. The book tells the story of a sixteen-year-old girl of great beauty and heroism, who is seduced by an irresponsible young man, becomes an unmarried mother of a child which does not live long, is abandoned on her wedding night by a hypocritical and unforgiving husband, and is finally hanged for the murder of the man who caused her ruin.

Likewise, in Jennie Gerhardt (1911), Dreiser created a tragic masterpiece which ranks as one of his major achievements. The book is praised by H.L. Mencken as "the best American novel ever done, with the

one exception of Huckleberry Finn."[15] Briefly stated, the book concerns Jennie, one of seven children in a poverty-stricken family, who appears to be on her way to social distinction and financial security when a United States Senator seduces her and then wants to marry her. Unluckily, Senator Brander dies suddenly, leaving her an unwed mother. Working as a maid to support her child and her family, she attracts Lester Kane, a prominent businessman, becomes his mistress, bears his name, and almost re-establishes herself. The Kane family finds out about Lester's affair and threatens to cut off his inheritance unless he abandons Jennie. He agrees to a separation and later marries an alluring sophisticate while Jennie endures further hardship as typhoid fever kills her child. In the end, Jennie has the satisfaction of hearing Lester tell her that she is the only one he ever loved, but his realization comes too late because he is now on his death-bed.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jennie Gerhardt seem to have much in common. The heroines of both books are from working-class families who have been seduced, while young and inexperienced, by wealthy men of a higher class. The seduction of both girls, Tess and Jennie, is made known by a pregnancy, and each has an illegitimate child out of wedlock and unknown to its father. Both children die. Both girls love and are loved by other men for whom news of the seduction is almost a shock, and both women are abandoned by the men they truly love largely because of society's conventions. Each lover realizes at the end when it is too late that he erred: Angel Clare in rejecting Tess after their wedding, and Lester Kane in abandoning Jennie after living with her for a number

of years and not marrying her. Furthermore, each suffers the anguish of having terribly wronged the one he loved. And, above all, each comes in the long run to ask forgiveness: Angel comes from Brazil to ask - and receive - Tess's forgiveness when it is too late. And Lester sends for Jennie when he is on his death-bed, asks her forgiveness and makes his death-bed confession. Thus each is momentarily re-united with the one she loves: Tess with Angel before her execution, and Jennie with Lester before the latter's death. Both girls live by the dictates of their hearts, are generous, self-sacrificing and unselfish, and are faithful to those they love. They are, in many ways, too good for the world in which they live. Their love and loyalty extend to death. Both women, innocent and pure, are made victims of wretched circumstances, economic necessity and unjust social forces which turn deeds into a mockery of their intentions. Finally, while Tess is tried for murder and sentenced to death, Jennie is abandoned and left waiting for the release that only death can bring.

In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Hardy has created his most sympathetic main character. Tess is an essentially good person whose main goal is to love and be loved by those who are the objects of her affection. The sad truth is that there is no one in the novel who is really worthy of Tess, no one who truly appreciates her. Hence, Tess is deprived of the nurturing and appreciation she craves, and is subjected to extended suffering that ultimately wears her down to the point where she seems to almost welcome death as an escape from the pain of living.

The two most crushing blows which shape Tess's tragic history are

her seduction by Alec and her rejection by Angel Clare after their wedding. Her seduction is the outcome of an unfortunate combination of circumstances which push her into the hands of her seducer. John Durbeyfield's conviction that his family is descended from noble stock, and Tess's mother's silly thought that their newly-found link with the rich d'Urbervilles family at Trantridge would put her daughter in "the way of marrying a gentleman" (Tess, 25) place Tess in a position where she is really vulnerable to seduction. After an accident in which Prince, the family's sole economic asset, is killed, Tess is persuaded by her mother into visiting Trantridge to "claim kin" with the rich d'Urbervilles there, and "ask for some help" (Tess, 29). Tess herself is reluctant, but on her mother's insistence agrees. The mother insists that she must dress up for the occasion, "'You will never set out to see your folks without dressing up more the dand than that?'" (Tess, 40). To please her mother, Tess "put herself in Joan's hands, saying serenely - 'Do what you like with me, mother'" (Tess, 40). Once the ceremony of dressing her daughter is performed, she walks some way with her, possessed with the thought that if Alec "don't marry her afore he will after" simply because he looks "all afire wi' love for her," and "any eye can see" that (Tess, 43).

The handing of Tess by her mother to Alec is suggestive in two ways. On the one hand, it shows Tess sent off to Trantridge as a pawn for her mother's mercenary expectations. On the other, it prefigures her inevitable seduction. Once there, Alec, the young man of this wealthy family whose original name is Stoke, but who falsely claims the

name of d'Urberville, is attracted by Tess's beauty and with a malicious intent offers her a job on the family's estate, the result of which is Tess's seduction and her return back home pregnant. To her mother's great disappointment, Tess has failed to get Alec to marry her - her mother's view is "any woman would have done it" (Tess, 69). Tess, from an anguished and agonized heart about to break cries out:

> 'O mother, my mother!' ... 'How could I be expected to know? I was a child when I left this house four months ago. Why didn't you tell me ?... Why didn't you warn me?' (Tess, 70).

It seems clear that a number of circumstances conspire to bring Tess's seduction about. When she arrives at the Slopes she is to a great extent in Alec's power; an opportunity for seduction is bound to come up sooner or later; Alec has merely to wait for it, which he does.

But seduction does not leave Tess a broken woman, or cripple her life, or even frustrate her hopes and ambitions. After her departure from the Slopes she insists on having nothing further to do with Alec because she does not love him, though it would be eminently prudent and practical to get from him what she could. She refuses even to be a passive and an abject creature. Hardy makes the seduction the turning point in the novel from which Tess's heroism begins and she starts to acquire a heroic dimension and stature. In his preface to the fifth edition, Hardy wrote:

> This novel being one wherein the great campaign of the heroine begins after an event in her experience which has usually been treated as fatal to her part of

> protagonist, or at least as the virtual ending of her enterprises and hopes.

And the heroic stature Tess begins to acquire in this section of the novel is perhaps best seen in the magnificent scene depicting the baptism of little Sorrow:

> Her figure looked singularly tall and imposing as she stood in her long white nightgown ... her high enthusiasm having a transfiguring effect upon the face which had been her undoing, showing as a thing of immaculate beauty, with a touch of dignity which was almost regal (Tess, 80).

After the death of her baby Tess becomes more capable of reflecting upon her experiences:

> Almost at a leap Tess thus changed from simple girl to complex woman. Symbols of reflectiveness passed into her face, and a note of tragedy at times into her voice. Her eyes grew larger and more eloquent (Tess, 84).

It is obvious that Tess is not the traditional degraded fallen woman. Tess will not allow her bygone trouble kill her spirit or break her heart. She soon recovers herself, draws strength from her very hardship, and tries to re-establish herself after the fall. Behind her attempt is the author's assertion that a fallen woman is not lost, and that she still has the potential for growth and renewal. His plea is:

> Let the truth be told - women do as a rule live through such humiliations, and regain their spirits, and again look about them with an interested eye (Tess, 88).

In her efforts to "regain" herself, Tess musters up all her

courage and reaches out to the fields looking for employment and finds work in Talbothays. While working there as a dairymaid she meets the ethereal Angel Clare.

Angel Clare is a pure product of the Emminster vicarage. When he arrives at Talbothays he is as naive as Tess had been when she arrived at the Slopes. There he enters a new moral world, a world of "aesthetic, sensuous, pagan pleasure in natural life and lush womanhood" (Tess, 133) entirely unknown to his previous life among his parents and brothers. As he and Tess drift into love, and he later proposes to her, Tess sees herself not suitable for Angel in society's eyes. When her love makes refusal no longer possible, she accepts and writes Angel a letter revealing her past experience with her seducer. Her letter with its honest and deeply-felt confession does not reach Angel because it slips in "beneath the carpet as well as beneath the door" (Tess, 178).

Her confession on the wedding eve marks the second crushing blow to Tess's moral integrity. That same eve witnesses Angel's rejection of Tess, which is the crucial event of the novel. As Dorothy Van Ghent points out, "Tess's tragedy turns on a secret revealed, that is on the substitution in Tess of an individualizing morality for the folk instinct of concealment and anonymity."[16] To a prudent and practical woman like her mother, Tess is merely a "simpleton" for confessing (Tess, 215). But Tess, who has risked everything she has so far gained for honesty, for faithfulness, and for conscience, though she soon loses Angel, does not regret what she had to do: "'... I felt the wickedness

of trying to blind him as to what had happened!...I could not - I dared not - so sin - against him!'" (Tess, 215).

Angel's rejection of Tess shows clearly that he is committed to a set of attitudes toward the fallen woman, and toward sexuality in general, which are unnatural and harmful in the extreme. Tess's sufferings are caused by this social context and the novel goes on to narrate the story of her suffering. Angel, with his emancipated and liberal ideas, represents the best his time and class have to offer. He is, in Hardy's words, an "advanced and well-meaning young man," and "a sample product of the last five-and-twenty years." Yet, he is the "slave to custom and conventionality" (Tess,221). When he is required to make a crucial moral judgment in relation to his wife's unintended error, he inevitably falls back upon " his early teachings" (Tess, 221), and, as we have already noted, they cause the mischief.

Hardy is critical of the conventional and hypocritical sides of Angel Clare. First, Angel's conventionality causes him to see Tess's experience in terms of those social customs and conventions which he himself knows are wrong and seeks to revise. Second, his hypocrisy is revealed most pointedly in the fact that he himself is as guilty as Tess. His own guilt of plunging into "eight-and-forty hours dissipation with a stranger" (Tess, 189) in London is "just the same," Tess says, as the guilt of her yielding to Alec (Tess, 190). In this connection, Angel, with all his advanced ideas seems more cruel to Tess than d'Urberville. Hardy does not lay the blame on Angel as an individual; rather, through Angel, he makes his attack on the "early teachings," the

customs and the conventions and the hypocrisy which underlie and govern the behaviour of Angel and other young men like him in late Victorian England. Thus the wedding night is turned into a ritual night of confessions in which guilt is transferred from one to the other, after which Tess is deserted, and subsequently cast out upon the deserts of Flintcomb-Ash.

After the hard months at Flintcomb-Ash, Tess is "one of the few" who did not look for other work at the Candlemas Fair "having a vaguely shaped hope that something would happen to render another outdoor engagement unnecessary" (Tess, 295). She remains devoted to Angel until her sense of judgment overcomes her devotion:

> Her husband, Angel Clare himself, had, like others, dealt out hard measure to her, surely he had! She had never before admitted such a thought; but he had surely! (Tess, 295).

And just as a number of circumstances conspired to bring her seduction about at the beginning of her career, now again, further troubles strike her family: the death of her father, the expulsion of her mother and the children from their cottage and the ensuing poverty. All of these circumstances, unhappy as they are, make Tess more vulnerable to Alec's blandishments. Quite helpless, indeed, she returns to Alec in despair, and experiences a period of great personal suffering, during which she comes to feel totally abandoned and rejected by Angel Clare.

It is obvious that Tess in her innocence, and great suffering and endurance, is made the victim of the desire and cruelty of Alec d'Urberville and Angel Clare. Alec's attempt to impose his will on Tess in the scene with the strawberries; his frightening her by driving the carriage fast and his refusal to slow unless she allows him to kiss her to which she reluctantly agrees, letting him give her "the kiss of mastery" (Tess, 45); his bribing the family by buying a "cob" for the father and toys for the children, expecting full obedience from the girl - are all clear evidences of Alec's brutality and "barbarism" (Tess,32). For him Tess is an inferior and insignificant creature; a chattel to "toy with and dismiss" (Tess, 130). He sees her as "something that is belonging to him. She cannot, in his conception, exist apart from him nor have any being apart from his being. For she is the embodiment of his desire".[17] His act in the scene of seduction shows him as the stock villain of melodrama,[18] and Tess as an innocent "victim" rather than "a villain."[19]

The circumstance that indicates clearly that her story is the tragedy of "a victim" is that Tess is made to suffer for what many other girls have got away with through secrecy and deception. Although her seduction is a commonplace one, or "a well-known catastrophe" as Hardy calls it in the preface, Tess is made to suffer and here Clare's cruelty is exposed and juxtaposed.

Angel, an "advanced" person, worships the false idol of chastity. When he is first attracted to Tess, it is chiefly her luxuriant, and presumably untouched natural beauty that he admires. "'What a fresh and

virginal daughter of nature that milkmaid is'" he exclaims upon his first noticing Tess (Tess, 102). When later he wants to marry her, he will tell his parents of the pure and "chaste as a vestal" bride he has chosen (Tess, 138). Probably Angel had every reason to assume that Tess is chaste because this, we are told, was the "social norm" (Tess, 282). This "social norm" overshadows Angel's modernity and advanced thought, and reveals his deeprooted conventionality.

On the eve of the wedding Angel scoffs at Tess's confession and sees her in terms of these social customs and conventions "a guilty woman in the guise of an innocent one" (Tess, 192) - undeserving of his forgiveness. This leads most damagingly to the separation and the desertion. When Angel returns from across the sea to forgive the "Pure" whom he wronged, he sees it is too late and blames himself, "'Ah - it is my fault!'" (Tess, 314). Again, Tess's role as a victim is confirmed in the scene of arrest at Stonehenge. Stonehenge, a pagan temple, is pictured as a place of ritual sacrifice. Tess, lying on the altar, and described as "a lesser creature than a woman" (Tess, 328), is like a sacrificial creature to be killed perhaps for the rebirth of a society free of the conventionality of Angel Clare.

On this stone of sacrifice Tess has her last rest and her last happiness. Before the law officers close in Tess speaks her last words:

> 'It is as it should be,' ... I am almost glad - yes, glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have

> had enough; ... she stood up, shook herself, and went forward, neither of the men having moved. 'I am ready,' she said quietly (Tess, 328).

Tess accepts her tragic fulfilment with dignity. She embraces her execution as the culmination of a long-developing desire for release from her earthly sufferings. Perhaps she will find in death the refuge from change and convention that she has been seeking. Her tragic fulfilment, perhaps, will be not only in her final union with Angel, but in her final attainment ot death as a refuge from change and the stresses change brings in its wake. This in no way implies that the novel is arguing that death is the only satisfying goal for man and woman. Tess's suffering and death at the end must bring about a purification of society, or, if not, it must, at least, lead in that direction. The narrator conditions our reaction to Tess's death by presenting her execution from a distance. Perhaps he is trying to stress Tess's littleness and her vulnerability in contrast to the forces which help destroy her. The narrator spares us the too painful sight of Tess's last moments in order to deepen the tragic effect and the sense of despair at the end of the novel. And by focusing on Angel and Liza-Lu, he is probably offering a sign of hope.

Certainly, this perspective helps us to focus our attention on Angel and Liza-Lu; the final emphasis on these two can be seen as either negative or positive, depending on whether or not one thinks they embody some hope for the future as opposed to simply embodying a re-enactment of the mistakes and disappointments of the past. That the final emphasis on Angel and Liza-Lu is meant to be positive seems to be

indicated by Tess's insistence that part of her, the part that is best and purest, will survive in the form of Liza-Lu. She asks Angel to marry Liza-Lu: "'She has all the best of me without the bad of me; and if she were to become yours it would almost seem as if death had not divided us. ..." (Tess, 326). As the death bell tolls solemnly signifying the end of the long suffering and struggle, the curtains close to open after some twenty years on another tragedy of a similar type - Jennie Gerhardt.

Jennie

In Jennie Gerhardt (1911), Dreiser created his most sympathetic heroine. Jennie, generous and unselfish, is made to suffer more than the others. The two unfortunate events in her life which shape her pathetic history are her seduction by Senator Brander just before his death, and later her abandonment by Lester Kane after their living together for nearly a dozen years. Like Tess's seduction by the stage villain Alec d'Urberville, Jennie's seduction is the result of an unfortunate combination of circumstances. William Gerhardt is ill and out of work. Mrs.Gerhardt living with an intense concern for the well-being of her children, who are near starvation, musters up her courage and seeks work as a charwoman at Columbus's most imposing hotel. The mother is assigned to scrubbing the marble stairs; Jennie comes to help her; and it is then that Senator Brander notices their forlorn circumstances only because of Jennie's general attractiveness. The mother earns extra money by taking on laundry work for some of the gentlemen guests of the hotel. Senator Brander has washing to be done.

Eighteen-year-old Jennie voluntarily takes and delivers the laundered shirts and linens. Her innocence and beauty appeal to Brander who takes the initiative in establishing friendship with her.

Senator Brander, of course, is not the conventional seducer of sentimental fiction. Unlike Hardy's Alec d'Urberville, who is drawn from Victorian melodrama, Senator Brander is the world-weary warrior, on the political level, who has "received his hard knocks and endured his losses" and, therefore, has an aura "which touched and awakened the sympathies of the imaginative."[20] And Jennie is the youthful innocent whose association with Brander represents her first contact with the world at large. Jennie's innocent admiration of Brander, and his response to her natural affection, encourage the growth of love. Brander honestly intends to marry her.

Jennie allows herself to be seduced by this politician of some worth and great reputation in an impulsive, thankful reaction to his efforts to save her brother Bass who is caught while stealing coal. Her seduction, however, does not exclude the prospect of becoming his bride and entering his social world soon, as he promises. But the excitement of the promise does not last long as the Senator's sudden death seems to "shatter all that had seemed promising" (Jennie, 83) and deprives Jennie of the man who is going to be the father of her child. Although she comes from a poor background, Jennie does not mourn the loss of material plenty; rather, the loss of life, the loss of the man himself, is the most crushing blow to Jennie.

William Gerhardt, impelled by religious fanaticism and an inflexible moral code, turns Jennie out of his house when the news of her pregnancy breaks:

> "She shall get out!" he said electrically. "She shall not stay under my roof! ... Let her get out now. We will see how the world treats her" (Jennie, 78-79).

Ironically, the world treats the sinning Jennie much better than it does the pious Gerhardt. Of all his children, it is only Jennie, the one he sent from his house, who will give him a home when he is in need of one. And of all the children, it is only Jennie who nurses and comforts him in the days leading up to his death. When he dies, Jennie attempts to communicate with her brothers and sisters, but each has an excuse for not helping and no one attends his funeral except Jennie. Earlier after turning her from his house, Gerhardt removes to another town to cover his shame, and Jennie, bereaved and broken in heart and spirit, is left alone to face the world on her own.

After her pregnancy and consequent expulsion from the house, Jennie does not let herself sink into degradation or in any other way act out the pattern established by so much nineteenth-century fiction on the theme of the seduced and fallen maiden. She sees her pregnancy as the product of the beneficent "processes of the all-mother" (Jennie, 86). Not feeling sullied or disgraced by the birth of her child, whom she names Vesta, Jennie revives her spirits and is uplifted and strengthened by the experience. She resolves to do the best she can to re-establish herself and her child in the eyes of society. Able to earn

a living, she finds work in the cultivated, upper-class home of the Bracebridges as a maid, and there she meets their house guest, Lester Kane.

Lester, very much like Angel Clare who sees in Tess the milkmaid a touch of "rarity" (Tess, 105), sees in this poor maid "a rare flower" and a magnetic charm (Jennie, 115). He feels that Jennie is "the one woman who answered somehow the biggest need of his nature" (Jennie, 115). This need of nature resides not in the "combination of elements - religious, commercial, social," but in the "pervading atmosphere of liberty ... which is productive of almost uncounted freedom of thought and action" (Jennie, 117). As Angel sees and responds to Tess's natural freshness, Lester sees and responds to Jennie's world of nature. Moreover, he sees her superiority to the world to which he is committed, and on several occasions throughout the novel Lester confesses that this uneducated maid is beyond him. Of course, she is beyond him in understanding of and feeling for life.

The second most unfortunate event in Jennie's life concerns the fortuitous injury to her father's hands - the result is immediate economic hardship. Jennie feels obliged to "sacrifice herself" (Jennie, 133). Again, she puts herself in the sacrificial role of appealing for aid to Lester Kane, a man who really desires her. His aid is followed by her acceptance of him as a lover and she agrees to go with him to New York. The train ride to New York recalls Carrie's flight with Hurstwood and suggests a movement into a new world; however, it is Lester's world that is changing, not Jennie's. When Jennie looks out of the window of

the train and studies the barren fields, Dreiser expects us to understand the sterility of the life that is to follow for Jennie. Notice the drabness and the sparsity of Jennie's feelings:

> There were the forests, leafless and bare; the wide, brown fields, wet with the rains of winter; the low farm-houses sitting amid flat stretches of prairie, their low roofs making them look as if they were hugging the ground. The train roared past little hamlets, with cottages of white and yellow and drab, their roofs blackened by frost and rain (Jennie, 150).

The leafless, bare forests, the brown fields, the flat stretches of prairie, the farm-houses hugging the ground, the drab cottages, and the blackened roofs are all images of a sterile, non-productive environment. During the years of their living together, even when everything ran smoothly and satisfactorily, Lester shows clearly his unwillingness to marry Jennie. And when faced with family disinheritance he decides to leave Jennie for the irresistible life of money, power, prestige and position. His brutal exploitation of Jennie thus far, and his hypocritical remarks, as will be shown clearly below, about her deceiving him over Vesta, and his insistence on confidence and trust in their relationship, show an almost barbaric indifference to Jennie's feelings.

Like Hardy's Clare who is an "advanced and well-meaning young man," "a sample product of the last five-and-twenty years" yet also "the slave to custom and conventionality" (Tess, 221), Lester with his philosophical background and sympathy for the advanced thought of his

age, is less understanding than he seems. Initially, Dreiser insists that Kane is something of a free-thinker:

> Lester Kane was the natural product of a combination of elements - religious, commercial, social - modified by that pervading atmosphere of liberty in our national life which is productive of almost uncounted freedom of thought and action (Jennie, 117).

Dreiser characterizes Lester in the paragraphs that follow as "a New Man."[21] He experiences a loss of faith; he experiences intellectual unrest for he is "confused by the multiplicity of things" (Jennie, 116); he abandons conventional beliefs, ceasing "to accept the fetish that birth and station presuppose any innate superiority" (Jennie, 116); "of course he must find the right woman, and in Jennie he believed that he discovered her" because "she appealed to him on every side; he had never known anybody like her" (Jennie, 119). But when it comes to the question of marriage, it is "not only impossible but unnecessary" (Jennie, 119). Finally, Lester seems self-deceived in the sense that he believes he is free of conventional forms and institutions, and is thus the master of his fate; but we discover that conventionality controls him both materially and spiritually, from within and without. So long as Jennie meets and satisfies his "sensual" and "animal" nature, marriage, he persuades himself, is "unnecessary" (Jennie, 117-118). While Lester's love for Jennie is thus seen as constrained and limited, her love for him is given an emotional depth by her ability to identify with and share his needs and desires, provide feminine companionship, and accept his need of avoiding commitments.

There is no denying the fact that Lester is using Jennie sexually and denying her equal status with himself. This is clearly shown in his declaration of love largely addressed to Jennie. Fairly early in their relationship, Lester declares to Jennie: "I love you and want you" (Jennie, 142). A little later the comments "He liked her - loved her, perhaps, in a selfish way" (Jennie, 168); and "Lester truly loved her in his own way" (Jennie, 173) indicate that he is exploiting her and point to his unwillingness to marry her because it "couldn't be done, not by a man in his position" (Jennie, 188). His concentration almost always on the fulfilment of his own desires is a sign that Jennie remains a sexual object for his convenient exploitation.

Jennie's sole desire is to be "an honoured wife and a happy mother" (Jennie, 176). She always keeps nurturing hopes that "perhaps, some day, he might really want to marry her" (Jennie, 227). Lester's vacillating remarks about loving Jennie and his withholding himself from any legal commitment to her personal, social, and economic future show him, indeed, in a hypocritical light. At Hyde Park, when Jennie's social situation is undermined by rejection from neighbours, she feels hopeless: "Lester was not inclined to marry her and put her right" (Jennie, 230). She continues to conceal Vesta's existence from Lester so that he will not use it as a reason for not marrying her. Upon learning of Vesta, Lester feels that Jennie's "love after all had been divided, part for him, part for the child" (Jennie, 183), and he uses the thought of "the presence of the child" as a barrier to marriage (Jennie, 211). Still he "had met no one who appealed to him as did

Jennie" (Jennie, 215), but he "did not want to marry her ...now, anyhow" (Jennie, 218). Once more he says "I love you, you know that" (Jennie, 218), but "can't marry you now. ... Might in the future" (Jennie, 219). Lester does have the power of personality to bring Jennie into his social world at many stages during these years. He does not do it, however, because it would have meant the flouting of a social convention which he does not respect but is not prepared to confront.

Lester, that is, is governed by conventional forms and institutions - which are wrong, and unjust as he comes to admit later - but of which he cannot break free. His belief that he can ignore the disapproval of his family and the world, and live as he wishes to, and his failure, from the very beginning, to justify his relationship with Jennie to his family, are not only clues to the double standard in himself, but also show how tightly he is in the grip of convention. When his affair is discovered by his sister Louise, it not only creates a scandal in the family, but also puts Lester under pressure to abandon Jennie. He defends Jennie against his father's accusations saying that he "might marry her" (Jennie, 239), but he is in fact unwilling to do so. His father's pressure, however, reinforces Lester's hesitation until a climax is reached with the death of the father. Archibald Kane's will does not threaten a separation as much as force abandonment. Lester chooses to abandon Jennie and marry Letty Gerald, an old admirer and a wealthy widow now with a large fortune in the bank. His marriage robs Jennie of her last hopes for the fulfilment of love, and forbids any future reunion; thus Jennie undergoes both public and private rejection.

After his marriage to Letty, Lester justifies himself by maintaining that he was in the grasp of the "armed forces of convention" (Jennie, 318), but it is he more than anybody else in the book who is responsible for Jennie's degraded position. His marriage, however, does not provide him with the tenderness and satisfaction he experienced with Jennie. He acquiesces finally in the fact of having deeply wronged her both in not marrying her when it was possible to do so, and in leaving her, and admits "that he was wrong" (Jennie, 318). His final illness follows soon, and with Letty conveniently absent in Europe, he sends for Jennie to avow his love and express his sorrow and guilt:

> I loved you. I love you now. I want to tell you that. It seems strange, but you're the only woman I ever did love truly. We should never have parted (Jennie, 360).

Lester finally realizes his mistake and admits that he truly loves Jennie. Despite his declaration of love and the minimal relief and restoration it brings to Jennie, it does not make up for the suffering created by his earlier denial of her.

Even in Lester's death social pressures assert themselves, and conventions still prevail:

> It was curious to see him lying in the parlour of this alien residence, candles at his head and feet, burning sepulchrally, a silver cross upon his breast, caressed by his waxen fingers. He would have smiled if he could have seen himself, but the Kane family was too conventional, too set in its convictions, to find anything strange in this (Jennie, 362).

The image, of course, is that of Lester bound and controlled by convention even in death. His family's conventional faith has in the end controlled him both in life and in death. Moreover, in the railway station when his coffin is loaded onto the train and Jennie stands by the iron gate, Dreiser chooses to emphasize social and economic status as the barrier between them even in death. After the funeral Jennie goes home to live alone and gaze into an indefinitely lonely future. And in casting Jennie to this extent in the sacrificial, Tess-like role, Dreiser too may be seen as affirming that a "fallen " woman could be after all a "Pure" and morally superior woman.

iii

Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jennie Gerhardt

"Pure Women Faithfully Presented"

Tess's Purity

The question of Tess's purity has often been regarded as controversial. At the time of the book's publication, some critics and readers considered the story unpleasant and the sub-title, "A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented" positively offensive. There is, for example, the Saturday Review writing in 1892, that "Mr.Hardy, it must be conceded, tells an unpleasant story in a very unpleasant way."[22] Or, there is Mowbray Morris writing in the Quarterly Review, 1892, that Hardy has "told an extremely disagreeable story in an extremely disagreeable manner."[23] Morris's and the other's objections, however, have not gone unanswered. In his explanatory note to the first edition, Hardy

anticipated these objections and answered them briefly:

> I will just add that the story is sent out in all sincerity of purpose, as an attempt to give an artistic form to a true sequence of things; and in respect of the book's opinions and sentiments, I would ask any too genteel reader, who cannot endure to have said what everybody nowadays thinks and feels, to remember a well-known sentence of St.Jerome's: If an offence come out of the truth, better is it that the offence come than that the truth be concealed.

Tess is essentially honest and "Pure" at heart, because she never, as the author indicates, meant to do wrong: "Never in her life - she could swear it from the bottom of her soul - had she ever intended to do wrong," and "whatever her sins, they were not sins of intention, but of inadvertence" (Tess, 295). Whatever she does, or whatever is done to her, Tess remains essentially "Pure". From the events preceding and following the seduction, it becomes clear that Tess has neither "cared" for Alec, nor does she encourage him in his amorous advances (Tess, 69). She is distressed when Alec puts the strawberries into her mouth; a "big tear" rolls down her face and she undoes the "kiss of mastery" that Alec gives her on the second journey to the "Slopes" (Tess, 45); and strong-mindedly decides to walk the last few miles rather than sit next to him. On her seduction, it is true, she was "temporarily blinded" and "stirred to confused surrender awhile" (Tess, 69), but the seduction is as closely related to the "distance between Trantridge and Chaseborough" which causes her "fatigue and provides Alec's opportunity" as it is to her "naivete and to Alec's egoism."[24] In a word, her seduction springs

mainly from her innocence and ignorance of sex matters, and her mother's folly in neglecting to warn her of "danger in men-folk" (Tess, 70). However, once the seduction is brought about Tess insists on having nothing further to do with Alec and soon runs away home.

The second crime of deception is not of Tess's making as much as the pure result of mischance. Tess had often intended to disclose her bygone trouble to Angel. Having failed to do so on more than one occasion, she tells her story in a letter and puts it under Angel's door. But Angel never sees her letter, because owing to her "haste," as the author points out, she "thrust it beneath the carpet as well as beneath the door" (Tess, 178). On the wedding eve, she finds the envelope containing her letter still under the carpet "sealed up, just as it had left her hands" (Tess, 178), and rushes immediately to tell Angel, but he refuses to listen:

> 'No, no - we can't have faults talked of - you must be deemed perfect to-day at least, my Sweet!' he cried. We shall have plenty of time, hereafter, I hope, to talk over our failings. I will confess mine at the same time' (Tess, 178).

Although Tess soon loses Angel after their wedding, she does not regret her confession. She says: "'If - if - it were to be done again - I should do the same'" (Tess, 215).

In his self-imposed exile in Brazil, Angel reconsiders Tess, realizes his mistake, and determines to return to her. Hardy writes of him:

> Having long discredited the old systems of mysticism, he now began to discredit the old appraisements of morality. He thought they wanted readjusting. Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently, who was the moral woman? (Tess, 282).

Angel returns to England resolved to do what he should have done before. He sees too late that his wife is "Pure" after all, and he can only say, turning against himself, "'Ah - it is my fault!'" (Tess, 314). When Angel unexpectedly reappears, something snaps in Tess's mind, the result is her murder of Alec d'Urberville and flight with Angel Clare.

Tess's one truly vulnerable spot is her almost religious worship of Angel, who takes on more than human qualities in her eyes. She sees Alec as the main reason Angel will never take her back, and in what appears to be an almost deranged state of mind, stabs Alec. At this point, Tess incorrectly assumes the existence of a necessary and logical connection between murdering Alec and regaining Angel's love: "'... Angel, will you forgive me my sin against you, now I have killed him?'" (Tess, 318). The narrator describes Angel's impressions at this moment: "The strength of her affection for himself," and "the strangeness of its quality ... had apparently extinguished her moral sense altogether" (Tess, 319).

Even in the murder of Alec, it seems that Tess is fundamentally innocent. She appears to have been temporarily maddened by the knowledge that she has lost Angel's forgiveness a second time by returning to Alec. When Angel visits her at Sandbourne she seems to be in a trance-like state: "But he had a vague consciousness of one thing

... that his original Tess had spiritually ceased to recognize the body before him as hers - allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current in a direction dissociated from its living will" (Tess,314). After the murder, Tess's innocence is emphasized once more when Tess and Angel attempt to hide in the surrounding countryside," but there was an unpractical movement throughout the day. ... Their every idea was temporary and unforfending, like the plans of two children" (Tess, 320). When they take refuge in the old mansion known as Bramshurst Court, the caretaker comes in the morning and catches a glimpse of the couple asleep in one of the upstairs bedrooms, and she is "so struck with their innocent appearance ... that her first indignation at the effrontery of tramps and vagabonds gave way to a momentary sentimentality over this genteel elopement, as it seemed" (Tess, 323-324).

When they are finally moved out of their Eden, Tess and Clare start toward the north, stumbling upon Stonehenge in their wanderings. Again, there is a reference to Tess's fundamental innocence, as she recalls, "'one of my mother's people was a shepherd here-abouts. ... And you used to say at Talbothays that I was a heathen. So now I am at home'" (Tess, 326). In her unconsciousness of guilt, Tess is indeed a "heathen" caught up in a ritual of sacrifice and death. Only infrequently does she acknowledge guilt for the murder, as when she tells Angel:

> 'But considering what my life has been I cannot see any man should, sooner or later, be able to help despising me. ... How wickedly mad I was! Yet formerly I never could bear to hurt a fly or a worm, and the sight of a bird in a cage used

often to make me cry' (Tess, 323).

After the murder, however, Tess is allowed to enjoy with Angel a brief and blissful honeymoon away from society's dubious standards of judgment and arbitrary classifications; but her happiness "could not have lasted." When she is arrested she speaks her last words with dignity, "I am ready," and walks to the scaffold with no hope of an Arthur Donnithorne to snatch her from the gallows.[25] The author cannot help, but "hovers and watches over {her} like a stricken father."[26]

Tess, though a murderess, remains a "Pure" woman - an essentially innocent victim of society's dubious standards of judgment and of an uncaring universe. From beginning to end she stands as pure womanhood: warmhearted, freely loving, loyal, self-effacing, brave and with "a fortitude in the face of adversity and a self-sacrificing devotion to others that make her", as Carl.J.Weber writes, "the finest woman in all the Wessex Novels."[27] Such are her worthwhile qualities that elevate her in our eyes, and she earns our respect and admiration.

Jennie's Purity

Similar to Tess - who never meant to do wrong - is Jennie Gerhardt. Jennie is basically a good woman, pure in heart, soul and spirit. Her seduction by Senator Brander is not motivated by coquettish, flirtatious advances on her part. She goes week by week to his hotel room to deliver laundry for her mother. Brander, the old warrior not the villainous seducer, often seen brooding over the loss of his Senate seat to political schemers, seems disillusioned with the

whole concept of the American dream of success. Obviously, aged fifty-two as the novel starts, Brander looks elsewhere for peace, contentment and happiness, and he finds these in Jennie. Senator Brander is deeply stirred by her beauty, so that he "felt exceedingly young as he talked to this girl" (Jennie, 23). Her youthful innocence so touches his heart that he does intend to marry her.

Jennie responds to Senator Brander with an affectionate daughterly respect which does not exclude an honest acceptance of him as a potential husband. When she goes to Brander to help get her brother out of jail she gives herself to him in an impulsive reaction of gratitude, and she conceives Vesta. Dreiser, that is, goes out of his way to make Jennie's behaviour seem natural and spontaneous.

When Jennie works at the Bracebridges as a maid to help support her family and her child she does not make any sort of advances to capture Lester's heart. "There were no evidences of coquetry about her," Lester remarks upon his first noticing her (Jennie, 112). As he starts his advances and kisses her, Jennie "was horrified, stunned, like a bird in the grasp of a cat" (Jennie, 114). The circumstance of her wretched poverty when her father's hands have been badly burned at work puts Jennie in a position peculiarly subject to seduction. She appeals for help to a man who desires her, and his aid is followed by her acceptance of him as a lover without excluding the thought that a "relationship with him meant possible motherhood for her again" (Jennie, 143). The narrator comments: "Virtue" in Jennie is "that quality of

generosity which offers itself willingly for another's service, and, being this, it is held by society to be nearly worthless" (Jennie 82). In the directness of the rejection of society's judgment here, Dreiser's awareness of the gap between his own and conventional society's attitude is clearly indicated.

Jennie's "virtue" is, indeed, held worthless by society. Lester too willfully male for Jennie, sees her as the embodied fulfilment of his desire, because she "answered somehow the biggest need of his nature" (Jennie, 115); and as something that he can possess - "You belong to me" (Jennie, 114), "I tell you you belong to me" (Jennie, 124).

Jennie's giving herself once more to a man like Lester is based on affection and family desperation. She continues to conceal Vesta's existence from Lester because she feels Lester would object to the child, take it as a sign of her unworthiness, and use it as one of many excuses for not marrying her. However, after Lester's acceptance of Vesta and the setting up of the Hyde Park household, Jennie's emotional life is centred on the attempt to feel some permanence in her relationship with Lester and a hope that he will marry her. She does not want to be more than "an honoured wife and a happy mother" (Jennie, 176), and her chief desire is that life would give her "Lester and Vesta together" (Jennie, 190).

After Louise's discovery of their relationship, Jennie tries to leave Lester. She thinks this attempt may force Lester into recognizing

his need for her and marrying her, but Lester cannot bring himself to do either. When his father dies and his will reveals the threat of cutting Lester's inheritance if he continues this illicit relationship, again it is Jennie who suggests that Lester must leave her.

The testimony to her purity of soul and ultimate goodness comes from those who have been indifferent to Jennie's feelings: her father and Lester. Fairly early in her life her father drives her from his house because she is pregnant with a child conceived outside of marriage. When he is almost completely out of the mainstream of life and can sit back and review things, - as Angel in Brazil reconsiders the case of Tess - he comes to understand that "sin" resides only in his religious code and conventional morality, and not in Jennie the woman. Eventually old Gerhardt does come to live with Jennie and his happiness comes from both Jennie, and, Vesta, his illegitimate grandchild. Shortly before his death, he asks Jennie's forgiveness as he says, "'I understand a lot of things I didn't. We get wiser as we get older'" (Jennie, 295). Gerhardt's last words acknowledge the sterility of his moral code and accentuate Jennie's pure spirit, as he says, "'You've been good to me. You're a good woman'" (Jennie, 296). For a man like Gerhardt so strongly tied to conventional society and religion, to accept Jennie, to ask her forgiveness, and to call her a good woman, is Dreiser's way of insisting that Jennie is pure.

Lester, too, comes to acknowledge the fact of Jennie's goodness and purity of heart: "'Well, there is something to her.' The

woman's emotion was so deep, so real. 'There's no explaining a good woman,' he said to himself" (Jennie, 298). Jennie is so deep to Lester because he comes from an entirely different world. In his conventionality Lester is similar to old Gerhardt.

Lester's recognition of Jennie's inner reality comes rather late. On Mr.O'Brien's visit to Lester's house with the crushing news about the will, Jennie's hope is extinguished and she decides this time that she "must leave him - if he would not leave her" (Jennie, 308). Lester leaves Jennie, but like old Gerhardt he judges Jennie and realizes "he was wrong" (Jennie, 318). Dreiser writes of him:

> He was feeling that he had been compelled to do the first ugly, brutal thing of his life. Jennie deserved better of him. It was a shame to forsake her after all the devotion she had manifested. Truly she had played a finer part than he. Worst of all, his deed could not be excused on the grounds of necessity. He could have lived on ten thousand a year, he could have done without the million and more which was now his. He could have done without the society, the pleasures of which had always been a lure. He could have, but he had not, and he had complicated it all with the thought of another woman (Jennie, 319).

Although he is married to a socialite at the end of the book, it is Jennie alone who is at his bedside offering him comfort. Lester confesses his guilt, sorrow and love: "'I loved you. I love you now. ... You're the only woman I ever did love truly. We should never have parted'" (Jennie, 360). Jennie's ultimate loyalty extends to death, and she, too, confesses her undying love and tells Lester there is nothing

to forgive. Lester dies at one with her, and this spiritual reunion brings happiness to Jennie.

After Lester's death, Jennie, alone, is still serene. She has found spiritual strength, which is infinitely superior to all society's values and arbitrary standards of judgment. Dreiser's hope is that the qualities of Jennie will be communicated to others and that her transcendent values, hinted at by her selection of the name Vesta and her adoption of a child by the name of Rose Perpetua, will thrive and flourish.

There is a definite shifting of emphasis at the end of the novel, away from Jennie's plight and toward a sense that she might have had some impact, if only a limited one, on those around her and, through the novel, on those who read about her. The emphasis becomes centred on what hope there is for humanity to go forward and make meaningful progress in moral terms so that others like Jennie will be appreciated for their potential of goodness and generosity rather than experiencing rejection and alienation. In the hope that humanity might someday develop philosophically and morally lies the potential that enhances human stature in the novel. Old Gerhardt and Lester express such a belief when both pass favourable judgment upon Jennie.

And just as in the case of Tess, Jennie's worthwhile qualities: her great compassion, her integrity, her generosity, her loyalty, her self-sacrificing devotion and her resilience, earn our respect and admiration.

Purity and the Natural Context

What affirms the innocence of both women is that Nature in itself is guiltless, and Tess and Jennie are examples of its innocence. Tess's character is defined for us in terms of her affinity with the natural world, her role in the human continuum, and her superiority to the society that fails to appreciate her. In contrast to Michael Henchard's and Jude's alienation from the natural order is Tess Durbeyfield's harmony with it. At almost every stage of her existence Tess appears as a luxuriant part of her natural environment. As a village girl Tess is "a mere vessel of emotion untinctured by experience," fitting completely into her natural surroundings (Tess, 12). After her seduction and the birth of her illegitimate child, Tess works in the field and is submerged within this environment. The narrator tells us that "a field-woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her own margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it" (Tess, 74). Hardy makes clear that Tess's suffering is not a "natural" reaction to her situation, but a result of society's dictates:

> The familiar surroundings had not darkened because of her grief, nor sickened because of her pain.
>
> She might have seen that what had bowed her head so profoundly - the thought of the world's concern at her situation - was founded on an illusion. ... Most of the misery had been generated by her conventional aspect, and not by her innate sensations (Tess, 77).

Yet natural vitality, as we observed earlier, is still strong in her. As she sets off for Talbothays dairy, Tess feels "unexpended youth, surging up a new after its temporary check" (Tess, 85).

When Angel is first attracted to her, it is chiefly her luxuriant, and presumably untouched natural beauty that he admires. She is "a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature" (Tess, 102). Moreover, she is associated in his mind with the "joyous and unforeseeing past, before the necessity of taking thought had made the heavens grey" (Tess, 102). She represents the innocence of his own childhood and youth - a personal Garden of Eden.

The Edenic surroundings of the dairy farm enable Angel to elaborate on this conception of Tess. In the "spectral, half-compounded, aqueous light" of early dawn the two have "a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve" (Tess, 110). Tess takes on a ghostly, mythical, ideal quality in Angel's eyes. "She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman - a whole sex condensed into one typical form" (Tess, 111). When he persists in calling her "Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names" Tess objects, perhaps sensing that this false idealization of herself is unwise (Tess, 111). Tess, of course, quite rightly does not want to be anything but what she is: "She did not like {these allusions} because she did not understand them. 'Call me Tess,' she would say askance; and he did" (Tess, 111).

After her marriage to Angel, her revelation of her past with Alec, and Angel's rejection of her, Tess begins to be conscious of the

suffering of all creatures. While wandering across a wooded region, she discovers a number of wounded pheasants writhing in the bushes and upon the ground. Her compassion shakes her out of the mood of self-pity into which she has fallen:

> With the impulse of a soul who could feel for kindred sufferers as much as for herself, Tess's first thought was to put the still living birds out of their torture, ... 'Poor darlings - to suppose myself the most miserable being on earth in the sight O' such misery as yours!' she exclaimed, her tears running down as she killed the birds tenderly. 'And not a twinge of bodily pain about me! I be not mangled, and I be not bleeding, and I have two hands to feed and clothe me' (Tess, 232-233).

Tess possesses a kind of perfection as well as purity. It is characteristic that she should ask Angel to marry her sister after she has been hanged, as if she were some generous tree, giving off another branch of life.

Like Tess, Jennie, above all of Dreiser's characters, is most perfectly attuned to nature. She is consistently described in terms of nature. She is "like the wood-dove ... a voice of sweetness in the summertime" (Jennie, 87). Her spiritual being consists of "trees, flowers, the world of sound and the world of colour" (Jennie, 17). Dreiser continues "only this daughter of the poor felt something - the beauty of the trees, the wonder of the rains, the colour of existence ... feeling their call of community in spirit" (Jennie, 18). Later, when she finds out she is pregnant with Senator Brander's child, that

she will probably be abandoned by her father, that Senator Brander is dead, and that she will have no job for support of her child and family, she sees "life at worst or best was beautiful - had always been so" (Jennie, 88). And after Jennie has borne Vesta out of wedlock, she returns to nature, where she sees and feels life the way no materialist ever could. As J.McAleer points out, "It lifts her above a world of convention that follows a dead letter and the goals of greed."28

Following the birth of Vesta, Jennie is "left alone, but, like the wood-dove, she was a voice of sweetness in the summertime." Again Jennie returns to nature like the birds of the air. Specifically, the dove, the bird of peace and reconciliation, represents her return to nature and the fulfilling life. "When her duties were lightest she was content to sit in quiet meditation, the marvel of life holding her as in a trance. When she was hardest pressed to aid her mother, she would sometimes find herself quietly singing, the pleasure of work lifting her out of herself" (Jennie, 87). Here is Dreiser's way of showing Jennie and nature are one. In moments of both quiet and work, she lives by a code suggested by Nature.

This same feeling for life and nature is passed down to Vesta and apparently exists in Jennie's adopted daughter Rose Perpetua. Jennie's selection of the name Vesta is significant. Like the vestal virgin of Roman mythology, Jennie's daughter will be the pure, chaste child unsoiled by association with a materialistic world. As Jennie's child she will learn from her mother the ability to feel life and be a part of nature and the spiritual world. Living apart from the

corruptive Gerhardt family influence and apart from the wiles of society, Jennie will use nature as her guide. But of course Nature is not invariably beneficent; Vesta catches typhoid fever and dies. Dreiser's intention is perhaps to demonstrate that Vesta must be sacrificed because, as Jennie realizes, she cannot escape the "ignominy of her birth and rearing" (Jennie, 335). However, Dreiser does not leave Jennie alone, for he has her adopt a child by the name of Rose Perpetua.

Dreiser's symbolism is all the more evident with the adopted child. Her status as an orphan suggests that, unlike Vesta, Rose Perpetua will be entirely Jennie's. Where Vesta had been tainted by the society of the Gerhardts and the Kanes, Jennie's daughter will be raised amid "the beautiful things - the flowers, the stars, the trees, the grass" (Jennie, 246). Such a lyrical future - apparently guaranteeing the continuation of all that is best in Jennie herself - is underpinned by a typically Dreiser revelation: Rose Perpetua is assured of an income paid to her by a trust company.

Just as the images of beauty and nature are consistently applied to Jennie and her descendants, imagery reinforces the static nature of the other characters. Lester Kane, for example, is vividly portrayed as a wintry soul pursuing the barrenness of materialism. As he is deciding to leave Jennie for financial reasons, he looks out of the window, and "there were some trees in the yard, where the darkness was settling" (Jennie, 291). Nature reflects his situation. By leaving Jennie he is

losing contact with the natural world associated with her. When he leaves her, he will have no contact with the spiritually replenishing life of nature. Furthermore, once he has established himself, "the one divine, far off event of the poet did not appeal to him as having any basis in fact" (Jennie, 345). The life of beauty, the life of spirit is gone. Only on his deathbed does he express "their real union - their real spiritual compatibility" (Jennie, 359).

Besides the use of nature imagery, the chair allusions here, as in Sister Carrie, play a significant role. Unlike Carrie, who is portrayed in a rocking chair always attempting to grasp the unattainable ideal, Jennie never sits and deliberates. She has no need to because she is already a part of this spiritual world. Lester is the deliberator. He frequently sits in a chair staring out of a window, desperately searching for something:

> Lester sat down in his easy-chair by the window ... and gazed ruminatively out over the flourishing city. Yonder was spread out before him, life with its concomitant phases of energy, hope, prosperity, and pleasure, and here he was suddenly struck by a wind of misfortune and blown aside for the time being - his prospects and purposes dissipated ... by this sudden tide of opposition? (Jennie, 207-208).

The sudden tide of opposition is, of course, the life of Jennie. He can have the wealth of the city if only he will abandon Jennie and her natural existence. Unfortunately, Lester eventually chooses the lights of the city, the prospect of future materialistc success.

Like Hardy's Tess, Jennie's character seems Dreiser's ideal. First and foremost, as John McAleer observes, Jennie possesses a simple and nonevasive nature; she lives by a code determined by the natural world. This natural world is the world of her heart and her instincts untouched by materialistic concerns. McAleer sees Jennie getting into trouble only when she abandons the sanctuary of nature to try her fortunes in a world unfamiliar to her. McAleer's final conclusion is that none of Dreiser's characters is more perfectly attuned to the flux of nature than Jennie,[29] who is "a product of the fancy, the feeling, the innate affection of the untutored but poetic mind" (Jennie, 1).

iv

Tess and Jennie as Tragic Heroines

Tess

Finally, before we bring this chapter to a close, we have to consider Tess and Jennie as tragic heroines. Critics are mainly agreed that Tess of the d'Urbervilles is a tragedy, but they are not agreed about what makes it tragic, or what kind of tragedy it is. Lionel Johnson, for instance, one of Hardy's earliest critics, describes the novel as "a long tragedy, upon the striving of that modern spirit, among the ancient Wessex places."[30] David Cecil, on the other hand, affirms that Tess is "village tragedy, composed of the drama of broken love and wronged girls, the feuds and the hangings which filled {Hardy's} early memories."[31] Cecil goes further to add: "When peeled of its realistic trappings, {the novel} reveals itself as a regular folk-tale tragedy."[32] More recently, Ted R. Spivey relates Hardy's

novel not to the folk, but to certain specifically literary trends in the nineteenth century. Tragedy for Hardy, as Spivey points out, is the "defeat of the romantic hero's desire to reach a higher spiritual state."[33] Hence, Hardy's tragic figures, according to Spivey, are "romantic heroes" in the line of "Byron's Manfred," "Goethe's Faust," "Shelley's Prometheus," "Emily Bronte's Heathcliff," and Tess Durbeyfield belongs to this company because of her "Shelleyan" capacity for exaltation.[34]

Again, from Northrop Frye's point of view, the novel is a "revenge tragedy" simply because of the fundamental plot or its "binary structure" which is "characteristic of revenge-tragedy."[35] Alec wrongs Tess, Tess suffers and eventually she kills Alec. This view is akin to the "folk-tale tragedy" view in which Tess in her murderous revenge "joins an innumerable company of folk heroines who stabbed and were hanged."[36] The revenge-story view thus puts emphasis on the heroic side of Tess's character. It calls attention to the freedom and courage of her behaviour particularly to the murder of Alec as an act of defiance and protest.

What gives the novel its tragic quality is not the involvement of Tess's fine spirit in a degrading story of seduction and revenge. Rather, it is the meaningfulness of her life considered as the story of a victim of society, a scapegoat and a martyr. She is often described in the text in terms suggesting Christ, sainthood, martyrdom, abstractions of goodness and other references suggesting admirable

endurance in the face of great suffering for the good of others. Tess wears "the thorny crown" of the knowledge that she is not suitable for Angel in society's eyes (Tess, 125). She carries "the heaviest of crosses" and feels "martyrdom" (Tess, 152). She is "a sort of celestial person" (Tess, 179), and feels "glorified by an irradiation not her own, like the angel whom St.John saw in the sun" (Tess, 180). Her inexplicable force for good makes her three rivals (Marian, Izz, and Retty) for Clare's attention, love her. These three catch some of Tess's radiance and even Izz Huett, at the moment of her greatest temptation, cannot escape from her basic honesty and admiration for Tess:

> Like the prophet on the top of Poer Izz Huett would fain have spoken perversely at such a moment, but the fascination excercised over her rougher nature by Tess's character compelled her to grace (Tess, 226).

And as the three labour in the desolate swede-field, Marian and Tess are described as reminding one of "some early Italian conception of the two Marys" (Tess, 238). The intensity of Tess's suffering and the enhanced significance of her self-sacrifice, suggested by such images, add to her dignity and increase her stature.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles, we may say, is the story of a scapegoat rather than a martyr because Tess does not seek the end that comes to her. She does not even sacrifice herself in the name of a higher good. What underlines that her story is one of a tragic victim is that Tess is made to suffer alone for what others have got away with

through secrecy. Despite the fact that her unfortunate experience with Alec is a commonplace one, or "a well-known catastrophe" as Hardy calls it in the preface (Tess, 1), yet Tess is made to suffer and die for it. Her role as a victim is confirmed in the scene of the arrest at Stonehenge. Stonehenge is pictured as a place of ritual sacrifices. Tess, lying on the altar, and described as "a lesser creature than a woman" (Tess,328), is like a sacrificial creature captured and killed in the name of some alleged higher good.

Tess, then, is a tragic heroine of great dimensions. Early in her life Tess starts to acquire a heroic stature. At school she has shown "great aptness" for knowledge, and was told she would make "a good teacher" (Tess, 158). Her superiority to her parents is stressed. It is only poverty that prevents Tess from pursuing a route toward greater freedom, knowledge, fulfilment and love. It is only her economic status that necessitates she travel to the Trantridge d'Urbervilles to claim kin, and out of this all her misfortune derives.

After her pregnancy and the birth of her child, Tess's heroic stature is emphasized when she makes every effort to save the life of her baby, and, when that becomes impossible, she tries to save its soul by baptism. This act gives her an aura of sublimity: in the dim light, as the narrator points out, the physical blemishes on Tess's body are invisible; and she is transfigured so that her face shows "as a thing of immaculate beauty, with a touch of dignity which was almost regal" (Tess, 80). Tess achieves a kind of apotheosis:

> The ecstasy of faith almost apotheosized her; it set upon her face a glowing irradiation, and brought a red spot into the middle of each cheek; while the miniature candle-flame inverted in her eye-pupils shone like a diamond. The children gazed up at her with more and more reverence, and no longer had a will for questioning. She did not look like Sissy to them now, but as a being large, towering, and awful - a divine personage with whom they had nothing in common (Tess, 81).

Once more, necessity makes Tess travel on foot over vast stretches of land whose size and roughness dwarf her efforts. Nevertheless, the motive of trying to give something of her limited resources to her ever-needy family remains powerful. The idea of her sublimity is repeated in the description of Tess in the early morning hours at Talbothays. There, she "seemed to Clare to exhibit a dignified largeness both of disposition and physique, an almost regnant power" (Tess, 110), and "a visionary essence" of "strange ethereal beauty" (Tess, 111). The elation she feels at her wedding ceremony creates a state of mind that glorifies Tess and blinds her to earthly details: "she was a sort of celestial person, who owed her being to poetry - one of those classical divinities Clare was accustomed to talk to her about when they took their walks together" (Tess, 179). Again, her heroic nature is most memorably revealed in the wedding-night confession after which Tess is deserted. At Stonehenge, Tess accepts her tragic fulfilment with dignity and speaks her last words in the novel quietly : "I am ready."

Tess, then, is a tragic heroine. Of course she is not a

flawless character. Hardy does indicate on occasion that these are potential weaknesses in her make-up. For example, the narrator points to her inheritance of "the slight incautiousness of character ... from her race" (Tess, 77). Although she is "an almost standard woman" otherwise (Tess, 77), she shares the satisfaction with a "slight initial performance" that is "part of the Durbeyfield temperament" (Tess, 88); she embodies "that reckless acquiescence in chance too apparent in the whole d'Urbervilles family" (Tess, 212). One might argue that these characteristics explain her incautious murder of Alec with the inevitable consequences that that act produce.

We pity Tess despite these "tragic flaws" however. This is because Tess, though a murderess, remains "a Pure Woman" as the sub-title indicates, and an essentially innocent victim.

Jennie

To describe Jennie as a traditional tragic heroine would falsify her character as well as "the aesthetic effect of her fate."[37] The essential element in the formation of her story, as in Sister Carrie, remains Dreiser's deep understanding of the nature of poverty, and Jennie's tragedy stems from the fact that she lived a life of deprivation. The opening scene, a "tragic culmination" (Jennie, 6), is a reminscence of the beginning of Dreiser's own family's worst days: his mother had to go looking for work at a hotel and the children had to steal coal. When the novel opens, the Gerhardts are so poor that the children are in the habit of picking up coal from the ground in the freight yard in Columbus, Ohio, where they live. Not satisfied with

their gleanings from the ground, Jennie's brother Sebastian climbs up on a lorry and throws down coal for the others to collect. At Christmas time, Sebastian, or Bass as he is called, is caught in the act by a railroad detective, who arrests him. It is this arrest that leads to Jennie's involvement with Senator Brander.

When she is carrying Brander's child, Jennie feels in no way sinful: "Strangely enough, she felt no useless remorse, no vain regrets. Her heart was pure, and she was conscious that it was filled with peace" (Jennie, 87). After the birth of her child, Jennie grows into a woman of some complexity and the emphasis in the novel is centred upon her deepening awareness of what life does to people. Working as a maid in the Bracebridge household broadens her character and helps her in "formulating a theory of existence" (Jennie, 100). Mrs. Bracebridge, representing taste and social grace, in certain moods would indicate her philosophy of life in epigrams:

> "Life is a battle, my dear. If you gain anything you will have to fight for it."
>
> "In my judgment it is silly not to take advantage of any aid which will help you to be what you want to be."
>
> "Most people are born silly. They are exactly what they are capable of being." (Jennie, 100).

Living by any such reductive formulae is impossible for Jennie. When Lester meets her in the Bracebridge's he sees that there is a basic sweetness and decency about her. Even sex with a girl like her would, he knows, inevitably "be bound up with love, tenderness, service"

(Jennie, 126), because Jennie is "no common girl, no toy of the passing hour" (Jennie, 118).

After living with Lester for several years, the conventions of society condemn Jennie and cause her pain. Her suffering is intensified by Lester's deserion of her. She feels herself condemned by an arbitrary social law which has no foundation in nature. But as a woman who embodies the recreative powers of suffering and survival she gains the courage and the strength to live. She comes to accept that the experience of sadness is part of living. When Lester marries Mrs.Gerald, his marriage does not upset Jennie because she has come to terms with the nature of reality. However, in her incomparable vibrancy and lovingness she is able to transcend that reality. The conclusion of the novel, thus, as Donald Pizer indicates, "has much of the emotional tension of a tragedy, though the principal figures of the novel cannot be described as conventional tragic heroes." Pizer goes further to add that

> This tragic effect arises in part from the sense of inevitability both in the separation of Jennie and Lester and in the emptiness which follows their separation. The effect is present as well in the deep and cumulative gloom caused by the deaths of Gerhardt, Vesta and Lester.[38]

Jennie is a tragic heroine wronged not only by men within a particular social context but by life itself. This is what the successive deaths of Gerhardt, Vesta, and Lester suggest. But Jennie moves us not only because of the life-denying gloom that surrounds her. More tragic is the sense of the thwarting of the life-enhancing

potential she possesses. She is the universal mother who could help, but not receive help. She could give, but she could not receive. She could attend to the needs and wants of others, but others failed to attend to her. Like Tess, she would certainly welcome death as a release from her earthly suffering. The last sentence of the novel suggests her groping thoughts about the future: "Days and days in endless reiteration, and then -?".

1. Donald Pizer, The Novels of Theodore Dreiser: A Critical Study (Minneapolis, 1976), p.355, n11.

2. H.L.Mencken, A Book of Prefaces (London, 1922), p.72.

3. David Cecil, Hardy The Novelist: An Essay in Criticism (London, 1943), p.16.

4. J.Hillis Miller, Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 79-80.

5. Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles (New York: W.W.Norton, 1979), p.34.

6. Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, p.36. All further page references are to the W.W.Norton edition and will be noted parenthetically within the text.

7. Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie (London, 1927), p.55. All further page references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically within the text.

8. Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native (London: Macmillan, 1975), p.45.

9. Pizer, The Novels of Theodore Dreiser, p.84

10. Ellen Moers, Two Dreisers (London, 1970), p.152

11. Miller, Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire, pp.146-147.

12. Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (New York: W.W.Norton, 1978), p.34. All further page references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically within the text.

13. Pizer, The Novels of Theodore Dreiser, pp. 96-97

14. Robert H. Elias, ed., Letters of Theodore Dreiser: A Selection (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), Vol.I, p.53.

15. As quoted in Philip L.Gerber, Theodore Dreiser (Boston, 1964), p.77.

16. Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (London, 1961), p.206.

17. D.H.Lawrence, "A Study of Thomas Hardy" in Phoenix: the Posthumous Papers of D.H.Lawrence, ed., Edward D.McDonald (London, 1936), p.483.

18. Carl J.Weber, Hardy of Wessex: His Life and Literary Career (New York, 1940), p.131.

19. Bernard J.Paris, "A Confusion of Many Standards: Conflicting Value Systems in Tess of the d'Urbervilles", Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 24 (1969-1970), 63.

20. Theodore Dreiser, Jennie Gerhardt (London, 1928), pp.20-21. All further page references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically within the text.

21. Pizer, The Novels of Theodore Dreiser, p.111.

22. "Novels" Saturday Review (London), 63 (1892), 74, rpt. in Laurence Lerner and John Holmstrom, eds., Thomas Hardy and His Readers (London, 1968), p.68.

23. Mowbray Morris, "Culture and Anarchy", Quarterly Review, 174 (1892), 323.

24. Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function, p.202.

25. Arthur Donnithorne in Adam Bede by George Eliot saves Hetty Sorrel from the gallows by being able to get her a reprieve.

26. Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy (London, 1968), p.131.

27. Weber, Hardy of Wessex: His Life and Literary Career, p.132.

28. John J.McAleer, Theodore Dreiser: An Introduction and Interpretation (New York, 1968), p.94.

29. Ibid. 93-98.

30. Lionel Johnson, The Art of Thomas Hardy (London, 1923), p.94.

31. Cecil, Hardy the Novelist: An Essay in Criticism, p.17.

32. Ibid. 17.

33. Ted R.Spivey, "Thomas Hardy's Tragic Hero", Nineteenth- Century Fiction, 9 (1954), 188.

34. Ibid. 186.

35. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p.209.

36. Ghent, The English Novel : Form and Function, p.209.

37. Pizer, The Novels of Theodore Dreiser, p.115.

38. Ibid. 129.

Chapter III

Hardy's Henchard and Dreiser's Cowperwood:

"The Survival of the Fittest"

The phrase "Survival of the Fittest" had been first used by Spencer in his The Principles of Biology (1864), in a chapter entitled "Indirect Equilibration" where the author defines that this survival of the fittest which he is seeking to express in mechanical terms, "is that which Mr.Darwin has called 'natural selection or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life'."[1] According to Spencer, "organisms which live," "Prove themselves fit to live, in so far as they have been tried;" at the same time "organisms which die," "prove themselves in some respects unfitted for living."[2] Spencer goes further to explain that "many who have looked at Nature with philosophic eyes have observed that death of the worst and multiplication of the best, must result in the maintenance of a constitute in harmony with surrounding circumstances." A species, therefore, must "ever tend to insure adaptation between it and its environment."[3] This is because individuals who perish, from Spencer's point of view, are the ones who cannot adapt themselves to their surroundings and thus do not participate in the general scheme of things that are ever tending towards the creation of higher and still higher types of beings. These higher types eliminate the lower ones and the fittest who survive "always further the production of modifications which produce fitness; whether they be modifications that have arisen incidentally, or

modifications, that have been caused by direct adaptation."[4]

As a boy of Wessex, Hardy had been reared on the edge of Egdon Heath; he had since childhood, a first hand opportunity of observing all forms of Nature in their deadly strife to survive and increase, feeding on each other. Excessively sensitive, the impressions which the observed cruelty of nature made upon him were unusually deep and lasting. Reading in Darwin of the struggle going on in all nature integrated his hitherto dim and disconnected impressions of the cruel plan by which Nature works and made him even more sensitive than before to the pain involved in the continuation of life. And as has already been mentioned in Chapter I both Hardy and Dreiser in their own ways were "blown to bits" by reading evolutionary theories that attacked accepted views of man, God and the Universe. And both found in the works of Darwin, Tyndall, and Spencer confirmation of the view that man is not the special creation of a benevolent deity, but the chance creation of unknowable forces existing in a world of struggle where "Survival of the Fittest" is the basic law.

In The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), haytrusser Henchard is engaged in a remarkable Darwinian struggle for survival.[5] Discouraged by his failure to get on in the world, and impatient of ordinary domestic restraints, Michael Henchard, the journeyman haytrusser, arrives at the fair at Weydon-Priors, drinks deeply of the alcoholic brews of the furmity-woman, and in a drunken moment auctions his family to the highest bidder, who is a sailor, for five guineas. Having shaken loose from his wife and discarded "that drooping rag of

a woman" by this "public sale of her body to a stranger, as horses are sold at a fair",[6] he becomes in remorse a teetotaller and expiates, as it were, his wrongdoing by presenting himself in the local church, and swearing to give up drinking for some twenty years to come. By aggressive use of the energy so released Henchard rises in twenty years to become the mayor and the wealthiest citizen of provincial Casterbridge. At the summit of his fortunes and the peak of his successes as the richest corn merchant, he is re-joined by his wife and child, who prevent his planned marriage to a lady heiress of social standing. At the same time - realizing his inability to keep order in his expanding business - he employs as manager a young Scotsman named Farfrae. Farfrae establishes an accounting system, and by accurate measurement and sharp bargaining so succeeds as to cause the jealous Mayor to discharge him. Farfrae, however, sets himself up independently, attracts trade by bringing in newly designed machinery, and - by prudently satisfying himself with the small profits repeatedly made - is enriched by the market fluctuations which result from Henchard's passionate attempt to crush him. He ends up by taking from his rival not only his wealth, but his magistrate's seat, his business plant, his mayoralty, the lady; and, when she dies and leaves Farfrae her fortune, he even takes away as a second wife the girl whom Henchard now discovers to be only his foster daughter.

Henchard retires from Casterbridge as the new order enters with the railroad and the new machinery. Leaving by way of the fairground which the progress of business methods has left desolate as himself,

he dies at last broken in body and spirit in a hovel on the barren wastes of Egdon Heath, while his rival in business continues to prosper. Henchard has proved unable to adapt, unfit to survive.

In a similar manner, in his A Trilogy of Desire, Dreiser creates in Frank Algernon Cowperwood an example of the Spencerian survival of the fittest. The Financier (1912) - the first book of the Trilogy - takes Cowperwood from boyhood up to the panic of 1871. Presented as a play-acting superman who is not much concerned with morals, Cowperwood, more ruthless than Henchard, is devoid of ethical or religious restraints. He steadily rises in the business world and proves a success from the very start because he does not hesitate to use unfair means and ruthless tactics when they are necessary. He believes that the strong man has the right to take what he wants without any regard for scruples or ethics. As financial agent for the city of Philadelphia, he plunders the public treasury, investing the money in private ventures and building up his personal fortunes. He gains control of the Philadelphia street and railway system, and is on the way to becoming a millionaire. To enhance his position, he makes plans for more investments when the Chicago fire of 1871 brings on a financial panic and he is exposed. And because his accomplice in the plundering of the treasury is a weakling with a conscience who confesses to the crime, Cowperwood's fortune is wiped out. Furthermore, as a result of having seduced the daughter of an old Irish contractor and politician, he loses his social position and is offered in sacrifice to an angry city. He pays the penalty of his

misusing public money by staying thirteen months in prison; gains a pardon; and quickly re-establishes his financial position by selling short in the panic of 1873 caused by the failure of Jay Cooke & Company. A few months subsequently, he takes his new made fortune and migrates from his native habitat toward the West and a freer field of development - Chicago.

In The Titan (1914), the second volume of the Trilogy, Dreiser continues the story of his financial superman as he moves from Philadelphia to Chicago, where he gains a stranglehold on distribution of suburban gas. Shortly afterwards, he starts to gain control of most of the city's street railways. In the same ruthless manner in which he acquires and runs the street railways, Cowperwood defies the public, the politicians and the press, as well as the city's leading figures in business, finance and industry. Following his manoeuvre to gain control of all the street railways in Chicago, he attempts to get a long term franchise of fifty years which would assure him an overwhelming success. But he is defeated in this plan and decides to move and hopefully realize his grandiose ambitions elsewhere. Sprinkled throughout these two novels are two wives and a number of mistresses of different types and temperaments who succumb to Cowperwood's irresistible magnetism. Every attractive female falls in the snare of his magnetism and deceptively attractive eyes. Among them are the wives and daughters of his friends, as well as those of his enemies, and in one way or another, they all partially contribute to his final defeat. On the night of his defeat in gaining control over Chicago's street railways caused by the city's leading figures in finance who concerted their efforts to put an

end to Cowperwood's expanding empire, Cowperwood, however, gains the beautiful Berenice Fleming, and soon afterwards moves from Chicago to New York.

In The Stoic - which would not be published until 1947 - Cowperwood moves from New York to England to climax his enterprises with a grand system of Underground tubes for London. Just as the project is well under way, Cowperwood dies of Bright's disease and all his hopes are smashed by this sudden death.

Before bringing to light the resemblances between Hardy's Mayor and Dreiser's Trilogy, it will be useful first to consider the similarities between Michael Henchard and Donald Farfrae. Both Henchard and Farfrae come unbidden into the life of Casterbridgeans: Henchard after abandoning Susan, Farfrae on his way to the New World. Both men have a past which is kept secret from the townspeople; Henchard's culpable past is disclosed by the exposure of the furmity woman in court and causes a scandal for the mayor in Casterbridge, whereas Farfrae's specific reasons for leaving Scotland remain obscure. Both men are friendless among Casterbridgeans. Both men are charitable: Henchard cares for Abel Whittle's mother, and Farfrae bends over backwards to be fair to Henchard. Both men have a great deal of energy, business savvy and shrewdness in agriculture. Both men are engaged in the same business. And both men love Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane. Of the two, Henchard is guilty of the more disreputable behaviour, and is considerably less liked by Casterbridgeans than Farfrae, who is immediately liked because of

"that hyperborean crispness, stringency and charm, as of a well-braced musical instrument, which had awakened the interest of Henchard, and of Elizabeth-Jane, and of the Three Mariners' jovial crew, at sight."[7]

But the major difference between Henchard and Farfrae is that Henchard is much more intense in his feelings than Farfrae. And as John Paterson explains,

> while Henchard stands for the grandeur of the human passions, for the heroism of spirit that prefers the dangerous satisfactions of the superhuman to the mild comforts of the merely human, Farfrae and Elizabeth stand for the claims of reason and thought, for the spirit of moderation that is prepared to come to terms with merely human possibilities.[8]

Farfrae, in fact, lacks Henchard's intensity of feeling and, concomitantly, the ability to suffer as intensely as Henchard does. When Lucetta dies, for example, Farfrae shows no excessive grief, but is in some way relieved that he had "exchanged a looming misery for a simple sorrow" (Mayor, 231).

In his business life, Henchard does not judge rightly the value of modern methods in agriculture, instead, he puts a high value on magic and superstition as ways of crushing his rival and gaining control, but these means prove ineffectual. Farfrae, at the same time is ready to accept any innovation, and shows a willingness to embrace any technological development in the industry of agriculture

which will enable him to prosper. Henchard is "hot-tempered" (Mayor, 136), strong and "wrongheaded" sometimes (Mayor, 87), Farfrae by contrast is "better-tempered" (Mayor, 77) and characterized by his cold attitude toward life. Henchard is in some degree rough and proud, but behind his granite exterior lurks deep passion, ardent and intense feeling, and under his pride he is vulnerable. Farfrae is soft, of a fine nature and capable of gentility. But behind his soft surface there is forcefulness and invulnerability. Henchard is impulsive and impatient, Farfrae is deliberate and patient. Henchard is very defiant and uncompromising. Farfrae is more accommodating and compromising.

Although there is really nothing wrong with Farfrae, our sympathy and interest are only mildly with him. Admittedly, Henchard is more insensitive at times than is Farfrae, but Farfrae lacks the depth and strength of someone like Henchard, who is definitely a man of character as Hardy tells us in the sub-title. The ultimate irony is of course, that Farfrae represents the wave of the future, and brings the fruits of science to Casterbridge. He is the type of person who has the attributes necessary for survival and success in the coming age. These attributes, similar to Frank Algernon Cowperwood's in The Trilogy, demand a price, however, in the loss of intensity of feeling and largeness of stature.

It is evident that The Mayor of Casterbridge and A Trilogy of Desire have much in common. Michael Henchard, Donald Farfrae and Frank Algernon Cowperwood - all three are creatures of nature,

engaged in a nakedly Darwinian struggle for survival. What occurs in The Mayor is a kind of limited warfare in the form of economic competition. This competition is dramatized, as D.A.Dike observes, as "a mortal combat between two corn merchants":

> One relatively old, energetic, careless of details, committed to antiquated methods, generous, personally unpopular because of his prestige and the pride that accompanies office; the other young, systematic, scrupulous about details, an innovator of scientific techniques, a tightwad and popular because of his modesty and because he is the underdog.[9]

Similarly, Dreiser's Trilogy dramatizes the fierce competition and the struggle between Cowperwood - vigorous, acute, remarkably subtle, intelligent and selfish, astonishingly energetic and audacious - and a range of Chicago's native capitalists who are hostile to anybody who may trespass the borders of their domain.

Thus both Henchard and Cowperwood emerge from a dubious past: Henchard after selling his wife and daughter; and Cowperwood after being imprisoned for mishandling public funds. Both rise to richness and power: Henchard becomes mayor on account of his wealth and amazing energy; and Cowperwood becomes the captain of Chicago industry on account of his energy, wealth and subtlety. Both are shrewd, energetic and combative; are uncompromising and admirably defiant. But what makes the difference between them is that although Henchard's rise and fall is similar to those of Cowperwood, he has within him a vulnerability to defeat. Cowperwood on the other hand is invulnerable and has within him the capacity for success. When,

for example, Cowperwood is at the low point in his career, after his imprisonment for misusing public money, he continues to conduct his business affairs with calm and re-asserted strength, and turns the collapse of Jay Cooke & Company to financial fortune.

Hardy admires Henchard's great force, generosity and warmth of feeling especially toward people like Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane. At the same time Hardy is critical of Henchard becasue he repeatedly indicates that Henchard is "hot-tempered," "wrong-headed," of stubborn pride, impulsive nature and rash actions. These characteristics are the components of the destructive energy in the character of Henchard. Because of his "wrong-headed" scheming, for example, he gambles heavily on disastrous rains to drive up the price of corn but suffers instead the biggest financial loss in his commercial career. His stubborn pride causes him to lose Lucetta and his impulsive nature makes him turn against Farfrae whom he formerly opened his heart to. Henchard's lack of a softer side, inability to scheme successfully and some inflexibility, probably justify his inability to conquer or triumph. As he is hurried to ruin he makes his strongest appeal to our sympathy because he is not an ill-intentioned or bad character. In his dealings in Casterbridge, we know, Henchard is fair and honest, good and kind to Susan and Elizabeth-Jane. He remarries Susan just to set things right, takes care of his step daughter and uses every trick he knows to keep her love and willingly destroys himself by admitting the furmity-woman's accusation in court. And above all he is the most conscientious of

bankrupts.

Unlike Hardy who is critical of Henchard, Dreiser admires his financial titan because Cowperwood represents a Dreiser ideal. Unlike Henchard, Cowperwood is the Machiavellian prince: crafty and subtle, without illusions, gifted with an amazingly strong and shrewd intellect, endowed with the ability to drive the human flock into a corner, to organize its chaos, manipulate its indecision and extract from it whatever personal gain he can. It is worth mentioning that Cowperwood bears some intriguing resemblances to Dreiser: both have the same passion for success, inspired by the same "chemisms" that informed Dreiser he was no common man. Both, as will be explained later in this chapter, are "varietists": Cowperwood divorces his first wife, Lillian Semple, to marry a headstrong Philadelphia socialite, Aileen Butler, and afterwards indulges freely in a sybaritic chain of love affairs which Dreiser narrates with obvious delight, ending in estrangement from his second wife and the establishment of a red-haired "protege," Berenice Fleming, in a Park Avenue mansion in New York. Dreiser too at the time he finished The Financier was separated from Sarah White, involved in discrete amatory dalliance with seventeen-year-old Thelma Cudlipp, and contemplating a divorce which he never obtained. However, Dreiser admires Cowperwood's bold, instinctive disdain for the conventionalities that bind lesser men. In sexual matters, Cowperwood is clearly by instinct the unchained soul Dreiser strove to become but could not; Dreiser admires Cowperwood the more because, unlike Henchard, Cowperwood is not hot-tempered or strong-headed. He is soft and subtle, skilful and systematic, and in his successful scheming he never wavers, never

doubts himself, and never lets his mind be deflected from his main purpose by anything secondary. The similarities between Henchard and Cowperwood end here to continue in Henchard's successor, Donald Farfrae.

Farfrae and Cowperwood, in fact, have much more in common. Both are "fair," "fresh" and "handsome." Both have some interest in art: Farfrae likes singing, and Cowperwood on his part has an interest in art especially paintings. The exterior of both men is soft, their nature is fine and they are attractive. Both men are alien invaders to the towns they come to conquer: Farfrae in leaving his homeland and coming to Casterbridge; and Cowperwood in leaving Philadelphia and going to Chicago. Both men are intent and determined on making their ways up in the world. And both men have largely succeeded in their aims. Both men show remarkably two-fold abilities: "the commercial and the romantic" (Mayor, 123). Both men marry twice while young: Farfrae marries Lucetta on account of her inherited wealth and her physical attraction; and after her death he marries Elizabeth-Jane. Likewise, Cowperwood marries Lillian Semple on account of her inherited wealth and physical attraction, and after getting a divorce he marries Aileen Butler. Both men are calm and cool; placid and poised; patient and deliberate. Both men show the same willingness to embrace modern innovations that may benefit humanity at large. Both men are incapable of deep affection and distinguished by the same lack of intensity of feeling and the inability to suffer as intensely as Michael Henchard does. Both men fail to grow and change through the course of their experiences; both men fail to gain in dignity, in compassion and in

sensitivity, as Michael Henchard does. Both men win in the battle of life and survive. The Mayor closes with Farfrae still continuing the pursuit after wealth and prestige, and Cowperwood is defeated only by "the larger forces of time and decay."[10] One feels that only these forces will ever defeat Farfrae.

Setting as theme in The Mayor

The Mayor of Casterbridge is exceptional among the Wessex novels in that it is mostly set in an important town, rather than in the country side. It is the only novel by Hardy which has a town setting for its entire action, and in which the plot does not depend upon a love story. The choice of Casterbridge as the scene of action is significant because of the historical time frame in which the events occur. Casterbridge is depicted as in an inevitable state of change, all the more remarkable because it is not a town easily affected by outside pressures: It was "for centuries an assize town, in which sensational exits from the world, antipodean absences, and such like, were half-yearly occurrences "(Mayor, 250), and was, therefore, not easily stirred up by anything; it was "by nature slow "(Mayor, 79). It is no accident that a man like Henchard should be mayor of such a town, since he is much like it. He too, as we will see, is "by nature slow" to accept change. He, with his background as haytrusser, finds a suitable context in Casterbridge: "the complement of the rural life around; not its urban opposite" (Mayor, 44).

Casterbridge is like Henchard in many other ways. Casterbridge, seen from the top of a hill, appears square and massive, reminding

one of Henchard's bulk and defiant stance (Mayor, 21). Casterbridge is described as an ambivalent mixture of goodness and wickedness (Mayor, 40), and Henchard is developed as a mixture of good and bad qualities. It is appropriate that Henchard's business should usually take him to the Durnover end of Casterbridge which is mostly rural (Mayor, 71), since Henchard still retains the simple and earthly qualities associated with the agricultural way of life, despite his pretension to sophistication when, for example, he admonishes Elizabeth- Jane for using language that will betray her humble origin.

Setting in The Mayor of Casterbridge must be analysed in the context of the historical sense of time that accompanies the choice of that setting. Casterbridge's great age creates, as Julian Moynahan has stated, a "remarkable sense of continuity of the past with present times which is expressed through the archaeological features of the setting."[11] This sense of the past embodied in the setting can be said to enhance the characters' statures and give them heroic dimension through associating them with such an established and enduring context; but it can also be seen as diminishing them in that, in the broad sweep of time conjured up by the past associations of Casterbridge, any individual man - even the mayor of Casterbridge - is of little importance and of little endurance.

Hardy chooses Casterbridge as a setting for the incidents of his story because Casterbridge is a place which has survived through the ages and, as such, stands as a monument of endurance; it is also

showing signs of its age and is, in parts, decaying. The most extensively developed image of structural decay in Casterbridge is the picture painted of High-Place Hall. It, like Casterbridge and all other man-made structure, is a prisoner of time and will, therefore, eventually decay; it seems somewhat ironic that those who designed it were aware of this fact:

> It was Palladian, and like most architecture erected since the Gothic age was a compilation rather than a design. But its reasonableness made it impressive. It was not rich, but rich enough. A timely consciousness of the ultimate vanity of human architecture, no less than of other human things, had prevented artistic superfluity (Mayor, 108).

The door of High-Place Hall is "older even than the house itself," suggesting a time antedating that so practical age in which High-Place Hall was constructed (Mayor, 108). The mask on the ark of the door reflects how both time and human contact can corrode:

> Originally the mask had exhibited a comic leer, as could still be discerned; but generations of Casterbridge boys had thrown stones at the mask, aiming at its open mouth; and the blows thereon had chipped off the lips and jaws as if they had been eaten away by disease (Mayor, 108).

The continuity of the past in the present is kept in focus during Henchard's trips to the bridge to contemplate suicide: the pool (Ten Hatches Hole) where Henchard confronts his effigy is the product of "the wash of centuries" (Mayor, 227), and the two bridges near lower Casterbridge bear the results of "friction from

generations of loungers" (Mayor, 170). Others before and after Henchard will feel like committing suicide from these bridges, and here the association seems more diminishing if one takes the view that committing suicide is a way of giving up, a failure to survive, and a refusal to try any more.

One of the most important historical settings in The Mayor of Casterbridge, however, is Maumbury Ring. The Ring's original use as a site of bloody fights among gladiators, and among various other kinds of combatants, continues into the present, although in a much less public fashion: "Pugilistic encounters almost to the death had come off down to recent dates in that secluded arena, entirely invisible to the outside world ..." (Mayor, 55). So the valiant and violent struggle of the past has been perpetuated into the present and with it some of mankind's more animal-like behaviour; man does not seem to be making much progress at evolving toward a higher form of conduct.

The size of the Ring may also serve to dwarf humanity, and the narrator carefully details his descriptions of the Ring to create a vivid impression of its size. He describes it from every conceivable viewpoint, from "standing in the middle of the area" (Mayor, 54) to "climbing to the top of the enclosure" (Mayor, 55). Hence because of both its huge size and its historical association, the Ring functions to diminish man's stature.

The Ring enforces the idea that there is a battle - or, more properly, a series of battles - going on. Henchard in effect,

becomes like a fighter, a gladiator, or a soldier who fights some of his most important battles at the Ring. Here he faces Susan and accepts his responsibility for past actions (Mayor, 53). Here he also encounters Lucetta when he fiercely desires revenge upon her, but overcomes his baser feelings and is kind to her (Mayor, 191). His greatest battle, the fight with Farfrae, however, does not occur at the Ring, although there are other links between this battle and the old gladiatorial combat. Struggle and fighting help to define Henchard's stature, because he refuses to give in; and much of the novel's action is a series of contests. Hence, the setting's inclusion of places of combat intensifies our sense of Henchard's mighty struggles and perhaps enlarges them as it stresses the continuity of human behaviour throughout time, and the sense of life as a continuing struggle.

The Mayor of Casterbridge as a city novel has something in common with Dreiser's urban novels especially those which are set in Chicago mainly the first half of Sister Carrie and the second part of the Trilogy - The Titan. The city, whether Casterbridge or Chicago, represents a modern jungle where man is involved in savage competition and a brutal struggle for survival. The description of Chicago that Dreiser gives early in Sister Carrie can stand as a description of America in 1890:

> It was a city of over 500,000, with the ambition, the daring, the activity of a metropolis of a million. Its streets and houses were already scattered over an area of seventy-five square miles. Its

> population was not so much thriving upon established commerce as upon the industries which prepared for the arrival of others. ... Street-car lines had been extended far out into the open country in anticipation of rapid growth (Carrie, 19).

The looming buildings, strange, endless streets, and surging impersonal crowds suggest a tense atmosphere of competition and struggle. If one fails in the competition, like Henchard in the Mayor and Hurstwood in Sister Carrie, one will be reduced into insignificance and sink into a life of poverty. Henchard and Hurstwood are both led to decline and death as a result of their failure and defeat. And if one succeeds and achieves the dream of material plenty, one will be victimized by the loss of inner spiritual unity. Paralleling Henchard's and Hurstwood's failure is Frafrae's, Carrie's, and Cowperwood's success and the spiritual defeat they undergo.

The Mayor of Casterbridge

The Mayor of Casterbridge, then, is the story of a combat, or, as Douglas Brown observes, "the tale of the struggle between the native countryman and the alien invader;"[12] between Michael Henchard, the middle-aged corn factor and mayor, and Donald Farfrae, the energetic young Scotsman whose two-fold abilities, "the commercial and the romantic," while exercised with the best of intentions, prove deadly to his patron (Mayor, 123).

The book opens, as we have seen, with Henchard approaching with

his wife, Susan, and their child, the village of "Weydon Priors." Arriving at the furmity-woman's tent, Henchard drinks too much and decides he has ruined his chances by marrying at eighteen. In a moment of drunkenness he disposes of his wife under the hammer to the highest bidder. On the next morning, in remorse, he looks in vain for his wife; and swears an oath not to drink for twenty years.

Twenty years after the original crime, Susan enters the provincial capital expecting with good reason to find the culprit metaphorically in the stocks: she finds him instead presiding arrogantly over a civic banquet as the wealthiest and most powerful man in the community. The scene is interrupted by the arrival of Farfrae whose first appearance in the novel comes as a man who has chosen to leave his old "hame," like many Scotsmen of the nineteenth century who had drifted south in search of prosperity. When Farfrae arrives in Casterbridge, Henchard is at the height of his power as leading merchant and civil magistrate, presiding as mayor "at the end of the table" in Casterbridge's best inn, the King's Arms, with the "Council men right and left" (Mayor, 25). Henchard is seriously embarrassed by having been forced to sell spoiled corn to the townspeople. Farfrae, appearing from out of the blue, saves Henchard from embarrassment and financial loss by showing him a method for restoring the corn. He asks no payment and wishes to continue his journey. But Henchard, having succeeded financially, politically and even romantically, in that he has an affair with an attractive young girl who is quite willing to marry him and whom he is considering marrying, with characteristic generosity and impulsiveness offers Farfrae a position as general manager of his enterprises, and is

willing to give him "a third share" in the ownership if he will only stay in Casterbridge (Mayor, 44). Farfrae ultimately accepts the offer.

As we have already noted, the characters of Henchard and Farfrae are formulated by Hardy in terms that clearly make them parallel figures. Both Henchard and Farfrae come unbidden into the life of Casterbridgeans, Henchard after abandoning his search for Susan, Farfrae on his way to the New World. Both are regarded as curiosities by the subdued residents of the country town: Henchard for his hardness in business dealings, Farfrae because of his ardent singing at the Three Mariners tavern. Neither man has any friends among Casterbridgeans and moreover, neither assimilates into the groups among whom they work and whom they lead. What both men have in common is "energy": Henchard's amazing energy "accounted for his financial success, and had been the basis for the Corporation's electing him mayor (Mayor, 86); Farfrae's "northern energy" had overmastered "the easygoing Wessex worthies" (Mayor, 88).

In the sleepy society of Casterbridge, Henchard could almost be seen as an embodiment of a Nietzschean life-force. Energy is his primary strength and it has permitted him to obtain wealth, prestige and power in the Casterbridge he had entered twenty years before. Energy alone would be sufficient to allow Henchard to retain his position, if he had still to contend only with Casterbridgeans. Hence, he does not begin to fail until Farfrae arrives. In addition to the energy which Henchard and Farfrae seem to have in equal

degree, Farfrae has further qualities which will enable him to triumph easily over Henchard. Henchard is poor at book-keeping and mathematics, poor at science, resistant to techniques and technology, extreme in his rewards and punishments, and basically incapable of taking a calculating and moderate approach to anything. Frafrae, by contrast, has what the future will require and has what will make a man successful. And, in the course of things, the new survival of the fittest will depend more on mental than physical strength because "for Henchard's muscle, Farfrae substitutes brain, for energy system, for antiquated drudgery, the efficiency of the machine."[13]

Still more can be said about these two parallel characters. Henchard, as has already been mentioned, is very defiant and uncompromising. What enlarges Henchard's stature in the novel is, in fact, his defiance in the face of what would discourage other people. The narrator tells us: "Misery taught him nothing more than defiant endurance of it" (Mayor, 96), and, later, that Henchard speaks "in his defiant way" (Mayor, 175). Defiance by itself is not necessarily admirable, but Henchard's defiance is combined with a genuine attempt to do the right thing; the forms of his rebellion, therefore, are predicated upon his somewhat individualistic sense of value. For example, when he sets out to compete with Farfrae, he insists on "'fair competition'" that is "'hard, keen, and unflinching'" (Mayor, 140). Farfrae, by contrast, is more likely to compromise than to defy. When Henchard tries to kill him, Farfrae does not take any initiative against Henchard; he does not even report him.

Farfrae possesses subtle "insight" that allows him to evaluate the alternatives during his thrust for success; Henchard has "doggedness," which blinds him to any method but direct personal action (Mayor, 88). Frafrae is deliberate and patient, Henchard impulsive and impatient. So the "conflict between the passion of the one and the reason of the other"[14] is not only predictable but inevitable. This conflict, as John Paterson observes, will be dramatized "as a conflict between the rugged individualist and the organization man, between primitive and modern ways of doing business."[15] Henchard is "bad at science," "bad at figures - a rule o'thumb sort of man;" Farfrae is "just the reverse" (Mayor, 37). So Farfrae becomes not only Henchard's manager to help with the books and the grain, but also his friend to eat heavy breakfasts with him and listen to the story of his life. And as things continue to seem to go well, Henchard makes amends to Susan and Elizabeth-Jane, and effects a reconciliation with his lost wife and child.

The friendship between Henchard and Farfrae turns sour only gradually. The tension starts when Henchard's workman, Abel Whittle, cannot wake up early enough in the morning to begin a business journey. Henchard does not discharge him as an enlightened employer might. However, he does something worse. He rushes to Whittle's cottage, shakes him out of sleep and marches him through the town without his breeches - in order to teach him a lesson. It is an outrageous thing to do which the Scottish manager objects to, and he threatens to leave for good if Whittle's humiliation is continued. We feel, as Ian Gregor points out, that "Henchard's treatment is concerned, but humiliating,

Farfrae's impersonal but just."16

What makes a collision between the two inevitable, however, is largely a question of Henchard's jealousy of Farfrae's phenomenal popularity with the local farmers and townspeople. From the innocent mouth of a child the older man hears the answer to his query as to why people always want his manager instead of him:

> '"And he's better-tempered, and Henchard's a fool to him," they say. And when some of the women were a-walking home they said, "He's a diment - he's a chap o' wax - he's the best - he's the horse for my money," says they. And they said, "He's the most understanding man o'them two by long chalks. I wish he was the master instead of Henchard," they said' (Mayor, 77).

The townspeople admire Farfrae for his commercial abilities, and they are also attracted to him because of his singing ability. A turning point in the fortunes of both men is reached when they compete at providing entertainment for the citizenry on the public holiday. Henchard's festive preparations are rained out while Farfrae's entertainment of music and dance is a success. As the disappointed mayor watches the people flock to Farfrae's constructed tent where the Scot is dancing briskly in the costume of a "Highlander," he is struck by envy. And when he perceives "the immense admiration for the Scotchman that revealed itself in the women's faces" "(Mayor, 81), he is so stung that his surly remarks - "'Mr.Farfrae's time as my manager is drawing to a close'" (Mayor, 83) - provoke Farfrae to break with him, once and for all.

Henchard's particular weaknesses are further illustrated by his behaviour after Susan's death. Lucetta moves to Casterbridge in order to bring about a reunion between her and the widower mayor. When he meets Lucetta after so long, and having made up his mind to propose the marriage that she has come to Casterbridge to bring about, Henchard might have approached the subject with a reasonable degree of ceremony; he might have allowed their long-interrupted friendship time to re-establish itself. One senses that if Frank Algernon Cowperwood had been concerned, there would have certainly been some pretence, on one side or other, of tenderness, of lingering affection, before the matter was brought to a strictly business basis. But this is not the way of Michael Henchard. On his first visit to Lucetta - on the first occasion when he can speak to her alone - he marches straight up to his lady, brushes aside her "nonsense" about his politeness in calling, and delivers his precise and compact statement of intention in a clumsy and bungling way:

> 'I've called to say that I am ready, as soon as custom will permit, to give you my name in return for your devotion, and what you lost by it in thinking too little of yourself and too much of me; to say that you can fix the day or month, with my full consent, whenever in your opinion it would be seemly : you know more of these things than I' (Mayor, 134).

For the first time in their acquaintance Lucetta "had the move" in relation to Henchard's insistent and direct proposal (Mayor, 136). She does not want to make a decision because she has already started to develop some interest in Farfrae and is becoming indifferent to Henchard. However, when Henchard leaves after this first visit the

narrator remarks:

> He had hardly gone the staircase when she dropped upon the sofa and jumped up again in a fit of desperation. I will love him!' she cried passionately {meaning Henchard's rival}; 'as for him - he's hot-tempered and stern, and it would be madness to bind myself to him knowing that. I won't be a slave to the past - I'll love where I choose!' (Mayor, 136).

A further clash between Henchard and Lucetta is thus inevitable.

On his next visit Henchard meets Farfrae at Lucetta's and cannot talk to her alone. A few months subsequently he sees Farfrae courting Lucetta in the harvest field and his jealousy is aroused. When Lucetta returns home that evening she finds the jealous man awaiting her in her house. She complains of the impropriety of this late visit. Henchard tries to wring an unwilling promise of marriage from Lucetta by mercilessly threatening to reveal their former relations, and makes at last a reference to Farfrae, "'the man you are thinking of is no better than I'" (Mayor, 151). Lucetta is infuriated:

> 'If you were as good as he you would leave me!' she cried passionately.
>
> This unluckily aroused Henchard. 'You cannot in honour refuse me,' he said. 'and unless you give me your promise this very night to be my wife, before a witness, I'll reveal our intimacy - in common fairness to other men!' (Mayor, 151).

Nothing more is said. "Without another word she rang the bell, and directed that Elizabeth-Jane should be fetched from her room" (Mayor, 151). In the presence of Elizabeth-Jane, the distracted woman agrees

to marry Henchard and straightway falls into a faint. There is some bewilderment and protest on the part of Elizabeth-Jane; but in less than a minute Henchard is gone, and Lucetta has begged her to "let it all be" (Mayor, 152). Henchard's hard energy and uncompromising ruthlessness seem to have won the day.

Hardy, however, puts Henchard under increasing pressure by allowing Farfrae to emerge as his former employer's chief competitor both in business and love. The rivalry builds up between the two when Farfrae has already established himself independently in the town, and begins scoring a few minor triumphs over his employer in his grain and hay establishment. Farfrae's success is, in fact, guaranteed because he introduces to Casterbridge "methods of economy," and new technology, which Henchard "can neither understand nor compete with".[17] Lucetta is now a lady of means - an heiress of a fortune whom Farfrae is about to marry. From her window, Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane can observe the varied activities in the market-place of Casterbridge. One day they see the arrival of a new seed-drill. As they get out into the market-place to satisfy their curiosity, they find its arrival is due to Farfrae, who is busy examining and displaying it. In the exchange that follows Henchard and Farfrae play out their roles as representatives of the old order and the new. Henchard talks sardonically about the new innovation, not knowing that the successful businessman of the future will have to learn to appreciate the possibilities of the machinery that can plant and harvest more efficiently than hand labour. Although man cannot gain complete control

over nature, he can use his machines at least to minimize the difficulties of the more laborious tasks, and maximize his chances of obtaining a comfortable yield from the land. Farfrae expresses the modern acceptance of any innovation that will improve productivity and insists that the horse-drill:

> 'Will revolutionize sowing hereabout! No more sowers flinging their seed about broadcast, so that some falls by the wayside and some among thorns, and all that. Each grain will go straight to its intended place, and nowhere else whatever!' (Mayor, 130).

As the tension increases between the two competitors, Henchard, under pressure of business rivalry from Farfrae, seeks out a weather prophet on the eve of his great commercial battle with Farfrae intending to "grind him into the ground," and "starve him out" (Mayor, 141). The prophet's prediction of rainy weather during the last fortnight in August causes Henchard to stake his fortunes on this prediction of a rainy harvest by purchasing large quantities of grain early in the harvest season at a relatively high price, believing that prices will rise and that thus he will be in a position to dominate the market and crush his rival. At the same time, Henchard never thinks that if the weather turns fair, prices will fall, and he will be caught with the high-priced grain in his granaries, forced to sell at a tremendous loss on a low market. However, Fall's prediction does turn out to be wrong: the weather is fine, the harvest excellent, and Henchard's business suffers a disastrous financial loss from which it never recovers.

Farfrae prospers on Henchard's loss and not simply because the

weather is a foe to Henchard and a friend to Fartrae. Indeed, Farfrae seems to be able to prosper by trading in farm produce, not because he has any mysterious control over natural forces but quite simply because he knows nature's unpredictability and acts accordingly. He is more cautious about his investments and takes only carefully calculated risks. In a word, Farfrae can adapt himself to circumstances and turn things to his own advantage more readily than Henchard. Henchard had enjoyed prosperity in agricultural trade until his emotional impulses got the better of his reason - which emphasizes the point that worldly success is not determined by the forces of external nature. However, failure to respect the natural forces he cannot predict, let alone control, puts Henchard in a perilous position.

It appears that Henchard, for the most part, does not recognize the significance of his experiences. Initially, at least, he does not seem to learn anything from his losses and failures. After his disastrous financial loss he refuses to accept responsibility for what has happened. Instead, he blames his employee Jopp, who has merely acquiesced in Henchard's decision:

> ... 'If it hadn't been for your blasted advice it might have been a fine day enough! Why did ye let me go on, hey? - when a word of doubt from you or anybody would have made me think twice! For you can never be sure of weather till 'tis past.'
>
> 'My advice, sir, was to do what you thought best.'
>
> 'A useful fellow! And the sooner you help somebody else in that way the better!' Henchard continued his address to Jopp in

> similar terms till it ended in Jopp's dismissal there and then, Henchard turning upon his heel and leaving him (Mayor, 145).

Later, it is Jopp who reveals Lucetta's love letters to the people in Mixen Lane, thus taking revenge on Henchard. So Henchard's headstrong temperament and lack of reflectiveness in this situation bring about a "concatenation of events" which includes the skimmity ride and eventually Lucetta's death (Mayor, 97).

At this point the furmity-woman appears in court before Henchard in his role as magistrate. The old woman recognizes Henchard and reveals the story of the wife-sale publicly. Henchard quite needlessly admits his old misdeed and thus ruins his reputation as an upright man. As a result, Lucetta breaks her reluctant promise to Henchard and secretly marries Farfrae. Henchard's complete ruin, soon follows in a trade war with his Scottish antagonist. Meanwhile, Farfrae "rises in favour among the townspeople" (Mayor, 85), grows rich and emerges as the "triumphant rival who rode rough-shod over" Henchard in business and in love (Mayor, 175). Eventually Farfrae is elected mayor and takes possession of Henchard's "yards and stores," and even Henchard's "best house" in Casterbridge with its "roomy chambers" (Mayor, 172). Henchard meantime becomes a bankrupt. When a meeting of the commissioners is held over his bankruptcy, Henchard takes out his golden watch, his purse, and his "yellow canvas money-bag" and lays them on the table, as an honest gesture of his intention of paying back his creditors (Mayor, 168). And step by step he comes to work for the man whom he once employed; takes to drinking; and is finally subjected to humiliation on

the day of the Royal Personage's visit.

The Royal Personage, as Dale Kramer points out, is "heralded both as a neo-Farfrean and as a seal of approval for the evolution in agricultural practice introduced by Farfrae."[18] Indeed, the Royal Personage as the narrator remarks had:

> consented to halt half-an-hour or so in the town, and to receive an address from the corporation of Casterbridge, which as a representative centre of husbandry, wished thus to express its sense of the great service he had rendered to agricultural science and economics, by his zealous promotion of designs for placing the art of farming on a more scientific footing (Mayor, 201).

Fortified by drink and carrying a small Union Jack, Henchard, wearing a brilliant rosette over his weather-beaten journeyman garments, tries to regain some of his former glory without disguising his present misery. He advances to the Personage, waves the flag and attempts to shake his hand, until, seized by Farfrae, he is removed forcibly. This incident precipitates Henchard's physical attack on Farfrae in the hayloft. In this fight Henchard manoeuvres Farfrae into a position where he can destroy him, but discovers that he cannot go through with it. Instead, he flings himself down on some sacks "in the abandonment of remorse" and takes "his full measure of shame and self-reproach" (Mayor, 210). On that same evening the skimmity ride is performed in the absence of Farfrae and leads, as has already been observed, to the death of Lucetta. Frafrae's reaction to this event is a true index of the character of a man whose limitations Hardy has hinted at from the

beginning of the novel.

Fairly early in the novel when the Scotsman halts in Casterbridge on his way to the New World, Henchard insists on his great affection for the newcomer in his attempt to encourage Farfrae to stay in Casterbridge; Farfrae, agrees, however, only because he recognizes the opportunity (Mayor, 44,49). Again at the beginning of their association together, when Henchard fervently offers his employee heavy breakfasts, and tells the story of his life, Farfrae's attention wanders and his eyes "travel over the intricate wood-carvings of the chimney-piece, representing garlanded lyres, shield, and quivers, on either side of a draped ox-skull, and flanked by heads of Apollo and Diana in low relief" (Mayor, 59). His distraction by the irrelevant details of the chimney-piece implies that Farfrae is indifferent or reluctant to become as intimate as Henchard's confessional attitude would seem to invite.

Farfrae's limitations are perhaps most strikingly put forth when he first courts Elizabeth-Jane, then Lucetta, then Elizabeth-Jane again. Farfrae initially shows great interest in Elizabeth-Jane and, indeed, almost proposes to her; he does not actually propose, however, citing his lack of wealth and Henchard's objections as reasons, but gives his assurances of doing so "'in a short time'" (Mayor, 84). A bit later, Farfrae receives Henchard's request "to discontinue attentions to Elizabeth-Jane" (Mayor, 88). The description of Farfrae's reaction is hardly indicative of much real feeling for Elizabeth-Jane, and calls into doubt the sincerity and worth of his earlier near-proposal: "he had felt a considerable interest in her, and after some cogitation he

decided that it would be as well to enact no Romeo just then - for the young girl's sake no less than his own" (Mayor, 88). The reader must remember that Farfrae had a proposal on his lips a few pages before this resolve.

Later on, when Lucetta moves to Casterbridge, Farfrae goes to her house to pay a courting visit to Elizabeth-Jane preparatory to proposing. During this visit, he forgets Elizabeth-Jane and is totally enraptured with Lucetta, "it having entirely escaped him that he had called to see Elizabeth-Jane" (Mayor, 126). However, the meeting between Farfrae and Lucetta ends with Farfrae's departure because a client is seeking him : Farfrae says "'business ought not to be neglected'" (Mayor, 125). Thus, even in the moment of love at first sight, Farfrae still retains enough economic awareness to be primarily concerned about his business. Lucetta, "a small deer" easy "to hunt" (Mayor, 192), recognizes that Farfrae is able to shift direction in the middle of a situation, but she does not know that he lacks intensity in emotional attachment. Moreover, on his wedding day he delays his return to Casterbridge a few hours because he "had been detained by important customers, whom, even in the exceptional circumstances he was not the man to neglect " (Mayor, 163). Later, after Farfrae and Lucetta are married, Lucetta asks Farfrae to "'give up business, and go away from here' " (Mayor, 186). Farfrae is "seriously disposed to this move, and they talked thereon till a visitor was announced" (Mayor, 186). The visitor asks Farfrae to accept the nomination for mayor, and Farfrae, ignoring all he and Lucetta have been discussing, agrees to do so. This scene shows a lack of awareness on Farfrae's part concerning Lucetta's

feelings that was forshadowed by his insensitivity toward Elizabeth-Jane.

After Lucetta's death "with its aftertones of disgrace,"[19] Farfrae easily "reconciles himself to her death with business-like acumen."[20] He goes into a "dead blank" only briefly, but shows no grief for the unborn child that dies with Lucetta, and soon afterwards he begins to dishonour the emotion to which he once had thrilled by courting Elizabeth-Jane, "a more acceptable substitute."[21] "There are men," Hardy remarks,

> whose hearts insist upon a dogged fidelity to some image or cause thrown by chance into their keeping, long after their judgment has pronounced it no rarity - even the reverse, indeed; and without them the band of the worthy is incomplete. But Farfrae was not of those. It was inevitable that the insight, briskness, and rapidity of his nature should take him out of the dead blank which his loss threw about him. He could not but perceive that by the death of Lucetta he had exchanged a looming misery for a simple sorrow (Mayor, 230-231).

The "insight," "briskness," and "rapidity" suggest Farfrae's unfeeling nature, his shallow emotions and his business-like attitude towards others - that he is, in other words, a man thoroughly committed to seeing the world in terms of commerce.

Furthermore, on his first arrival in Casterbridge, Farfrae sings his homesickness out in the Three Mariners: "'It's hame, and it's hame, hame fain would I be'" (Mayor, 39), and when the novel approaches its close, on his wedding to Elizabeth-Jane, Farfrae sings once more of "his dear native country that he loved so well as never

to have revisited it" (Mayor, 247). When the couple set out in search for Henchard after their wedding, they decide not to travel too far because Farfrae remarks that to stay overnight away from home "'will make a hole in a sovereign'" (Mayor, 253); and his comment after hearing Abel Whittle's extended description of Henchard's final suffering and death is that of a man utterly incapable of any depth of passion and of perceiving any grandeur in human experience: "'Dear me - is that so!'" (Mayor, 254).

In the portrayal of Farfrae, Hardy seems to suggest that Farfrae's worldly success depends largely on his ability to adapt himself to his surroundings at whatever personal cost. In contrast, Henchard, who has always sought the approval and admiration of others, who has insisted upon being the centre of attention, who has fiercely striven to obtain what the world terms success, and who had admirably "used his one talent of energy to create a position of affluence out of absolutely nothing" (Mayor, 169), fails ultimately because he lacks those qualities of character by which he might make the most of his opportunities, and in particular adapt himself to his environment and circumstances.

An admirable man in his way though impulsive and passionate, Henchard is unfitted to succeed in a complex economy by the very virtues that enabled him to succeed in a primitive one. The cold-blooded calculations of the bookkeeper eliminate the impulsive hunches of the rough-and-ready entrepreneur just as surely as the railroad eliminates the horse-drawn coach. Henchard gives up the struggle and withdraws to live like a "tangless lion about the back rooms of a house in which his

stepdaughter was mistress" (Mayor, 236). With the coming of Newson to claim Elizabeth-Jane, his own daughter, Henchard punishes himself by leaving Casterbridge to die broken in body and spirit on the barren wastes of Egdon Heath. With his death, narrated by Abel Whittle to a grief-stricken Elizabeth-Jane, the novel closes. What Hardy leaves unsaid is that Henchard, being the man he is, cannot conquer in a business world that contains a Farfrae. At the same time, Farfrae himself can be supplanted by a man like Cowperwood who is more clever professionally and more intelligently selfish than Farfrae - as we will see in our discussion of the story of this financial superman in The Financier and The Titan.

Dreiser and Charles T.Yerkes

Dreiser came to admire one financial titan above all others. 'Survival of the fittest' was the acceptable philosophy of an age of enterprise, and few men seemed more fit or enterprising than Charles Tyson Yerkes (1837-1905). In most respects he was the antithesis of Dreiser, and this is why Dreiser came to admire this American tycoon so much. Son of a Philadelphia banker, Yerkes as a youth had displayed a precocious financial ability. At twenty-one he opened his own brokerage house, and at twenty-four his own banking house. Although his parents were Quakers, Yerkes showed little evidence of possessing the inner light himself. It appeared that his principal goal in life was to get ahead as fast as he could and by whatever means. At a relatively young age he had built up a small fortune, but soon the panic resulting from the Chicago fire of 1871 ruined him financially, and a prison term for dipping into the public treasury seemed to end permanently his

promising career in Philadelphia. Showing a ruthless courage which Dreiser perhaps envied, Yerkes bounced back from these defeats and remade his fortune. He moved to Chicago, a city in which he became a financial colossus, virtually monopolizing the street railways there. From Chicago, he moved on to London, where he gained control of its subways, winning out over English and American competitors.

As a lover, too, Yerkes was a legendary figure, a fact which could not help but appeal to Dreiser, who had been haunted as a youth by the fear of sexual inadequacy.[22] After divorcing his first wife to marry a younger woman, Yerkes then became estranged from his second wife, and took as "protégées," a number of beautiful and talented teen-age girls. When Yerkes died, he left a far smaller estate than had been expected, and the rumour was that he had secretly divided it among his mistresses before his death.

As a boy in Chicago in the late eighteen eighties, Dreiser had heard of Yerkes, who was becoming a controversial figure in the city. As a cub reporter in Chicago in the early nineties, Dreiser most probably met Yerkes. And since Yerkes became a nationally and internationally known figure in the field of finance, whose personal and financial affairs were widely reported in the yellow press, Dreiser was certainly aware of the financier's career throughout this period. When Yerkes died in New York City in December, 1905, Dreiser was working his way up in the publishing field there, not as a writer concerned to depict the struggles of the poor, but as an editor of magazines attuned to success. In late December and early January in front-page obituaries and

postmortem scandalmongering, New York newspapers recapitulated Yerkes' phenomenally and luridly successful life. Nearly ten years before Dreiser began work on the first volume of the Trilogy, he clipped a newspaper account of Yerkes' career that was clearly written by a man with the talent of a literary critic:

> We couldn't expect Mr.Howells to deal with such a story. ... We shudder to think what might happen if Mr.James undertook it. ... By divine right it is the property of Balzac, with Daudet as residuary legatee. Both are dead.[23]

But Balzac's American heir was very much alive, and clearly already had in mind the possibility of taking on such a story.

Some time after Yerkes's death, Dreiser began clipping or copying every newspaper item or magazine article on Yerkes that he could find. And in his research in the following years he went to Philadelphia, Chicago and London, carefully following in Yerkes's footsteps, talking to people who knew him or of him, and poring over references in libraries and newspaper offices. In the Dreiser Collection at the University of Pennsylvania, there are thousands of pages of carefully pencilled notes and newspaper clippings dealing with the public and private aspects of Yerkes's life. These amazingly thorough notes, which include approving comments by Dreiser in the margins, testify to his deep and lasting interest in, and perhaps identification with, the infamous financier.[24]

In fact Dreiser became identified with Yerkes to a remarkable

degree.[25] We can see evidence of this in the startling changes that took place in his personality during the period he was researching and writing the Trilogy based on Yerkes's life. According to Swanberg, a complete transformation had taken place in Dreiser between the time he left Chicago in 1893 as a cub reporter and the time he returned doing research on Yerkes in 1912. In Swanberg's words, "the one-time weakling had become aggressive, courageous, a bit truculent, embodying qualities that could best be described in a word that would never have described him before he was twenty: he was a fighter." [26] Sister Carrie's publishing troubles, which preyed on Dreiser like a bereavement, mark the beginning of his problems with his nerves. Carrie's bad reviews and negligible sale depressed Dreiser deeply, and he developed psychosomatic pains in the tips of his fingers. He sank into further despair because of his inability to write. Insomnia racked him, as did the pain in his fingertips. Moving from Philadelphia to New York in 1903, his insomnia grew worse, and he saw himself divided into two persons, one a tall, selfish individual, the other a silent philosopher who watched his struggle with calm detachment. After a period of near starvation in New York, he pondered suicide but was saved by the thought that the future had to hold out something better than the present - and applied for a job in the New York Central Railroad. Working in the railroad for a while he started to recover. Eventually he resigned feeling sure enough of his being able to write again, and thereafter aimed to be hard and aggressive, determined to succeed. So the transformation in Dreiser probably should be dated not from 1893, but after 1903, when he was recovering from his nervous breakdown and becoming increasingly interested in Yerkes. In immersing himself in

Yerkes's life, then, Dreiser was not only preparing for the Trilogy, he was assuming a new personality. The spiritual and sympathetic Dreiser, who had been uppermost before the breakdown in 1903, gradually gave way to the tougher, more selfish Dreiser.

The Financier and The Titan

In The Financier (1912), and The Titan (1914), Dreiser according to Nathan Glick "leaves behind his lower-class 'fallen women,' weaklings tossed about by society's currents, and chooses instead a hero of an entirely different mold."[27] Indeed, the Trilogy, the first volume of which Dreiser began writing in 1911, represents a radical departure from his first two novels. The Financier and The Titan can be discussed together because they are of the same texture, cut from the same cloth. Both portray the career of Frank Algernon Cowperwood, a financial superman of the late nineteenth century. And as Charles Walcutt suggests, these two novels "contain perhaps the greatest mass of documentation to be found in any American novels in the naturalistic tradition."[28] Essentially these two books record two main things in minutest detail - Cowperwood's economic rise to power and his amorous affairs.

The Financier and The Titan appear to be the first major works in which Dreiser's imagination is heavily under the influence of Spencer's philosophy. Frank Algernon Cowperwood seems, as F.O.Matthiessen points out, to epitomize quite clearly "Dreiser's version of 'the survival of the fittest,' intermingled with traits of Nietzsche's 'superman,' and possessing also what Dreiser calls a

'Machiavellian' brain."[29] By reading Spencer Dreiser was able to replace the Christian God of love with the naturalistic god of force, and the Sermon on the Mount with the Survival of the Fittest. In The Financier and The Titan, Dreiser makes clear that the one who is fittest to survive amid the forces of man's environment is he who is most vigorous, most acute, subtle, energetic, and most intelligently selfish. As a result he makes his hero into a kind of superman. Cowperwood is portrayed as a brilliant personality, a powerful intellect, a man impelled by the law of his being along a path of ruthless ambition and selfish gratification.

The Financier

Dreiser pronounces Cowperwood "a financier by instinct."[30] As a little boy, Frank was influenced by his father and by many details he observed in his early home life. Henry Worthington Cowperwood, Frank's father, was becoming a prominent banker "when the boy was already beginning to turn a very sensible, vigorous eye on the world" (Financier, 7). Often on Saturdays, Frank would come to the bank and watch the monetary process. And as Dreiser notes of the young Frank, he was "a financier by instinct, and all the knowledge that pertained to that great art was as natural to him as the emotions and subtleties are to a poet" (Financier, 14).

At the very beginning of The Financier, then, Dreiser shows money to be Cowperwood's motivating instinct. It is also early in the novel that Dreiser clearly inserts his first use of a recurring pattern

of animal imagery. As a boy Frank is fascinated by the contest between a squid and a lobster on display in a tank at a nearby fishmarket. Early in his life Cowperwood encounters an example of nature's law of the survival of the fittest in the animal kingdom. Day after day as he passes by, he watches the pursuit of the squid by the lobster, and how "small portions of his body began to disappear, snapped off by the relentless claws of his pursuer" (Financier, 10). Little by little, the squid's one means of defence, his ink-bag becomes empty; bit by bit, pieces of his body are torn off by his deadly foe: "Small portions of its body, or its tail were frequently left in the claws of the monster below" (Financier, 10). This tiny tragedy Dreiser presents to Cowperwood - and to his readers - as an allegory of life. The weak are inevitably destined to perish; the strong as inevitably destined to satisfy themselves at the expense of their less capable associates.

Thus the battle between the lobster and the squid make an enduring impression upon the young ten-year-old mind, especially one which is so eager and inquisitive. By including this passage early, Dreiser is signalling the reasons for Cowperwood's future actions. As Cowperwood stares at the lobster and the slain squid, he begins to question, even at this young age, the meaning of life:

> "That's the way it has to be, I guess," he commented to himself." ... Lobsters lived on squids and other things. What lived on lobsters? Men, of course! Sure, that was it! And what lived on men? he asked himself. ... He wasn't so sure about men living on men; but men did kill each other (Financier, 10-11).

In this brief background section of Frank's life, Dreiser lays the foundation to Frank's character. Dreiser intentionally portrays money as Frank's prime interest, coupled with an intense curiosity about a philosophy which he later understands as the survival of the fittest. Both of these, money and an amoral philosophy, are continually operative throughout The Financier and The Titan.

Cowperwood never doubts that he is one of the strong. In the beginning of his business career he silently sizes up his employers, learns from their limitations, and determines to play with brilliant audacity the game they play with timorous conventionality. When he becomes fully immersed in the world of big business, he is consistently portrayed through animal imagery stressing the ruthlessness of everything involved in the process. Cowperwood lives by the creed, "to get what you could and hold it fast" (Financier, 63); moreover, on the stock exchange he begins "snapping bargains right from under the teeth of his rivals" (Financier, 64). Similarly, those around him, in particular the stock brokers, are also being preyed upon by the very society they participate in. As Dreiser remarks about them, they are "like hawks watching for an opportunity to snatch their prey from under the very claws of their opponents" (Financier, 49). They are, indeed, "like a lot of gulls or stormy petrels, hanging on the lee of the wind, hungry and anxious to snap up any unwary fish" (Financier, 49).

Even when Cowperwood is seemingly backed into a corner after having financial difficulties, he can still recover because, "like the lobster, he could grow another claw" (Financier, 212). And as he had

done as a boy, he comes to realize what life is all about : it is a battle and in this battle the prize is to the strong. Cowperwood, however, is not the only man who lives by this code, because the whole business community operates in similar fashion. Anyone who tries to behave differently will fall prey to those around him. As Dreiser remarks through the thoughts of Cowperwood:

> They were all hawks - he and they. They were all tigers facing each other in a financial jungle ... wolves at one moment, smiling, friendly human beings at another. Such was life. He had no illusions. ... They are like wolves... (Financier, 223-448).

In an existence like this, the single most important consideration is keeping one's teeth and claws sharp. Cowperwood knows that when one falters or falls, even for an instant, someone is poised, ready to take advantage.

When in the midst of his deals Cowperwood is caught by the financial panic, is unable to cover his city loans, and is sentenced to a term in the penitentiary, he accepts the failure as a temporary set-back - inconvenient, no doubt, but in no way reflecting on him, and in no way prejudicing his future career. Even in prison "he is at one with himself and in harmony with the Darwinian universe."[31] During the grand jury investigation and subsequent trial, Cowperwood is confident and glowing with health. "During all this whirl of disaster," Dreiser writes "he had never once lost his head or his courage" (Financier, 278). Facing the judge and the jury, he looks

ahead unflinchingly, secretly contemptuous of these weak men who presume to judge him. For his part, Stener, the snivelling city treasurer, by contrast, is intimidated from the beginning. His conscience tortures him, but Cowperwood's does not. "That thing conscience which obsesses and rides some people to destruction, did not trouble him at all" (Financier, 278). After having served part of his term, the city treasurer emerges from prison a broken man. The indomitable Cowperwood emerges as bold and strong as ever, and immediately sets to work to rebuild his fortune, which he does in fairly short order during the panic of 1873. In that panic the financiers scurry about the floor of the stock exchange in desperate confusion. Cowperwood, by contrast, is "perfectly calm, deadly cold," and like "a wolf prowling under glittering, bitter stars in the night, ... looking down into the humble folds of simple men and seeing what their ignorance and their unsophistication would cost them" (Financier, 503). In a few days, Cowperwood remakes a fortune mounting to a million dollars, and his future is still before him. And as Charles Shapiro suggests, it is "a future, of course, determined by his past - by a past and a philosophy which reaches back to the memorable day when the lobster finally destroyed his weak opponent."[32]

With women, too, Cowperwood is the superman whose imperious personality is a law unto itself. Women find him irresistible. Relatively speaking, little sexual activity occurs in the Financier, especially in comparison with the second book of the Trilogy. The reasons for this are twofold. First, Dreiser's major purpose in The Financier is to detail the rise and fall of the financial superman.

Cowperwood's major thrust in this first part is centred on making money and achieving power. To these ends, women do not contribute, and, therefore, they are not needed. Second, in Dreiser's scheme of things, women come to represent the spirit of youth and the pursuit of beauty. Cowperwood, in this first book, is only briefly touched by the appeal of this other world.

The two major women characters who appear in The Financier, and play important roles in Cowperwood's life, are Lillian Semple and Aileen Butler. At the young age of nineteen, Cowperwood is attracted to Lillian only physically. Lillian - the widow of a middle-aged friend - is a woman five years his senior, but fair, fresh and young-looking, tall and shapely, of pale waxen complexion and gray-blue eyes. Her "pale, uncertain, lymphatic body" (Financier, 60) challenged Cowperwood who "wanted to find out if he could make her love him vigorously and could rout out the memory of the other life" (Financier, 59). "Strange ambition. Strange perversion, one might also say "as the author indicates (Financier, 59). The fact is that Cowperwood is attracted to Lillian partly because of her beauty, and partly because of her wealth. Her husband has just recently died and Lillian represents a secure financial base. When Cowperwood gets that "pale, uncertain, lymphatic body" in matrimony, he does waken it to a new sense of the depth of life and sexuality.

Several years after his marriage to Lillian, Cowperwood realizes that her youth and beauty are diminishing. The tall, creamy body no

longer stirs him, and, above all, his ideas, his ambitions, and his growing interest in art, he discovers, are beyond Lillian's imagination to comprehend. It is obvious from the start that Lillian Semple is not the woman for Cowperwood. "Her seniority, her widowhood, her placid, retiring disposition {and} ... her sense of convention" all point toward a woman who does not possess the vitality to keep the interest of a man like Cowperwood (Financier, 58). And, as Philip Gerber observes, "Cowperwood marries without the least perception that his wife and he are temperamentally incompatible."33

When Aileen Butler appears on the scene, Cowperwood sees nothing sacred about the marriage bond. Once his interest in his wife fades away, he does not hesitate to ignore moral conventions and have a relationship with this nineteen-year-old daughter of Edward Butler, an Irish Catholic politician who thought of Cowperwood as one of his sons. Cowperwood sees in Aileen, who stands in contrast with Lillian, "the capacity for passion, the strength of will, the contempt for convention, and the sensibility and intelligence to match his own."34 Early in her life Aileen rejects the religion of her family. At ten she had asked her father who St. Peter was, and he, quoting Christ, had said that he was the rock upon which the church - that is the Catholic church - was built. She paid less attention to her father's explanation of his faith as she grew older (Financier, 218). Her convent-school education did not change her basically pagan nature. When her relationship with Cowperwood is discovered, she refuses to let her father make her feel she has committed a "sin" because she is in love with Cowperwood, a married man, as the following exchange between them illustrates:

> "... Ye won't be wanting to keep up that {her affair with Cowperwood} - committin' a mortal sin. It's against the laws of God and man."
>
> He did so hope the thought of sin would come to Aileen - the enormity of her crime from a spiritual point of view - but Aileen did not see it at all.
>
> "You don't understand me, father," she exclaimed, hopelessly, towards the end. "You can't. I have one idea, and you have another. But I don't seem able to make you understand now. The fact is if you want to know it, I don't believe in the Catholic Church any more, so there" (Financier, 313).

Aileen, that is, is like Cowperwood himself, unwilling to lead her life according to the dictates of religion or conventional morality. She chooses to become Cowperwood's mistress though he promises to marry her as soon as he can get a divorce from Lillian.

Just as in the beginning when the image of the lobster and the squid is introduced to give Cowperwood his "initial glimpse of the laws of survival,"[35] Dreiser chooses to conclude the Financier with another passage of natural history. In the epilogue, in a section entitled "Concerning Mycteroperca Bonaci", Dreiser compares Cowperwood with a number of creatures whose nature is known to be very deceptive and cunning. Of these the black grouper fish is chosen as the one which best illustrates the inherent treachery of nature. The black grouper lives long "because of its very remarkable ability to adapt itself to conditions" (Financier, 509). It possesses a special power of altering its appearance by blending its skin colour with its background. In this way it becomes able to elude its enemies, and also pounce on its prey

with great success. Dreiser seems to demonstrate that Machiavellianism of nature is one of Cowperwood's dominant characteristics. Donald Pizer stresses this fact where he points out that Dreiser "offers the Black Grouper as an illustration of the principle of 'simulation' governing survival and power in all life."[36] Once again Dreiser underlines his commitment to a generally Darwinian and rather specifically Spencerian view of the nature of human society. Cowperwood is a superman because he adapts better and more cunningly to the environment in which he moves.

As the novel draws to a close, Cowperwood catches the train that is going west to Chicago, then a young city with dazzling opportunities for the daring. The industrialist thinks there he can begin again in a more youthful and progressive manner. There the past is unknown or ignored. What beckons is the future, radiant, enchanting. One panic ruined him - a second brought him a second fortune. The dynamic urge of Chicago that "singing flame of a city" finds a response in the driving power of the titan who will become its master.

The Titan

The Titan depicts Cowperwood moving to Chicago, a city full of men with whom Cowperwood has much in common, in so far as they all have the same materialistic aspirations. But Cowperwood has the advantage over them in that he has already fallen off his wall and survived, and so he lacks the fear of consequences which acts as a brake on their ventures. This novel too conceives of life as a struggle. It portrays the life of Cowperwood as a battle not only between Cowperwood, the uncompromising

individualist and a range of Chicago capitalists, but also between Cowperwood and ward politicians, journalists and finally the mass of the people all of whom are naturally and institutionally hostile to the daring individual. The crucial episodes in the novel are the fight over gas company franchises; the struggle for street car lines on the North Side; the efforts of the Cowperwoods to enter Chicago society; the manoeuvring of an election victory, and then the fight for a long-term franchise that will assure Cowperwood an overwhelming success.

Chicago, this "singing flame of a city"[37] is depicted as the place of combat and evoked by the author almost as a spiritual terrain suitable for warriors:

> A very bard of a city this, singing of high deeds and high hopes, its heavy brogans buried deep in the mire of circumstance. Take Athens, oh, Greece! Italy, do you keep Rome! This was the Babylon, the Troy, the Nineveh of a younger day. ... Here hungry men, raw from the shops and fields, idylls and romances in their minds builded them an empire crying glory in the mud (The Titan, 14).

Cowperwood comes to the arena fully prepared. His observation of the lobster and the squid taught him that to eat is better than to be eaten, and his imprisonment has destroyed whatever softening sympathy he possessed before. His thoughts, in fact, are tempered and hardened, as Dreiser indicates, "by thirteen months of reflection in the Eastern District Penitentiary" (The Titan, 35), Cowperwood, therefore, "could, should, and would rule alone":

> No man must ever again have the least claim on him save a suppliant. He wanted no more dangerous combinations such as he had had with Stener, ... and others. By right of financial intellect and courage he was first, and would so prove it. Men must swing around him as planets around the sun (The Titan, 35).

Moreover, given his ruthlessness, his selfishness, and conviction of his own invulnerability, with his motto proudly announced several times in the two novels, - "I satisfy myself" - Cowperwood will bring to bear all his skills and schemes in the business world of this expanding city.

Dreiser recognizes from the very first and takes care to insist that Cowperwood is a man of immense force. Force as John McAleer points out "enables him {Cowperwood} to carry off his business dealings with such verve."[38] In First Principles, which Dreiser read in Pittsburgh in 1894, Spencer argued that the basis of all existence was force. Space, time and motion are modes of consciousness which are, in turn, derived from the perception of force. Force was godlike in its absoluteness. "Thus all other modes of consciousness are derivable from experiences of Force," Spencer wrote, "but experiences of Force are not derivable from anything else ... "[39]. When we speak of the indestructibility of matter, we really mean, Spencer explained, the indestructibility of Force.[40] "The sole truth which transcends experience by underlying it," he concluded, "is thus the Persistence of Force."[41]

Spencer identified the basic force as electricity, [42] from which

all the energy flowed. Born in the second half of the nineteenth century, Dreiser was a child of this age of "electrical power." In his childhood in Indiana, he was fascinated by the new electrical lighting and telephones. Yerkes, whom, as we have seen, Dreiser was fascinated by, had had, in a literal sense, an electrical career. In Chicago, he had converted some lines to trolley or elevated service, electrifying most of the city's transportation system. When he died in 1905, he was in the process of converting London's subways to electricity.

Cowperwood's electric force resides mainly in his eyes: "They were wonderful eyes, soft and spring-like at times, glowing with a rich, human understanding which on the instant could harden and flash lightning" (The Titan, 15). Magnetic, chemical, current or dynamic, electricity in all forms is the basis of Cowperwood's super-human strength in the Trilogy. Almost everything he thinks, touches, or looks at becomes magnetized or electrified - his business associates and competitors, his women, and even his horses. Cowperwood's eyes repeatedly emerge as his chief means of conveying his electrical force. Throughout the Trilogy, in business and in romance, Cowperwood never takes his eyes off his victims, just as the lobster in the famous episode in the opening chapter of the Trilogy never takes its beady black eyes off the squid. And as Philip Gerber observes, "his face or his eye were a formula or philosophic abracadabra which cast a spell. One look at times and the bird was snared - transfixed, helpless."43

Once more, Force, as Dreiser understood it, is a manifestation

of a vital sexual nature; hence it is requisite that a record of Cowperwood's sexual vitality be given. After nearly three years of financial success, Cowperwood discovers that Aileen no longer fits his plans. Aileen is still attractive to him but it is "too bad that people of obviously more conservative tendencies were so opposed to her" (The Titan, 114). Cowperwood, the shrewd observer of what would benefit him materially, "was inclined to feel that perhaps now another type of woman would be better for him socially. If he had a harder type, one with keener artistic perceptions and a penchant for just the right social touch or note, how much better he would do! (The Titan, 114). There may be disagreements over how convincingly Dreiser portrays the development of this new interest. Immediately after Cowperwood arrives at this conclusion, his thoughts turn to art, and his interest in paintings and sculptures increases as he develops at the same time the same interest for women. It is not that Aileen at this point of the narrative becomes insignificant in Cowperwood's life. The fact is "no woman can hold Cowperwood long."[44] From the time Cowperwood decides that he needs rejuvenation because Aileen no longer satisfies him, and until he finally meets Berenice Fleming, a dozen women, of all kinds, parade one by one through the pages of The Titan. Philip Gerber points out that Cowperwood never uses any common sense in his selection of women, always choosing wives and daughters of close friends.[45]

Indeed all of Cowperwood's paramours are either wealthy or influential people. Ella Hubby is the daughter of a well-to-do Commission merchant, Josephine Ledwell is a financier with the Board of Trade; Rita Sohlberg is the wife of a Danish violinist and artist

whom Cowperwood is very intimate with; Stephanie Platow is the daughter of a wealthy and influential furrier; Cecily Haguenin is the daughter of his sincerest and most sympathetic journalistic supporter; Florence Cochrane is the daughter of the president of the Chicago West Division Company; and Carolyn Hand is the wife of an eminent investor, the wealthy director of a number of mercantile and financial institutions in the city. Added to these are those women who are little more than mentioned in passing - Dorothy Ormsby, Jessie Belle Hinsdale, Toma Lewis and Hilda Jewel. In these affairs the hero reflects Dreiser's own attitude, which he calls "varietism," the male's need (as Dreiser saw it) for many partners, and his resistance to permanent attachment. As in business, so too in romantic affairs, Dreiser rejected conventional morality as hypocritical and cowardly, a sign of the weakness that he feared to find in himself and that he often treated contemptuously in his fiction. Hence Cowperwood's long list of amatory engagements.

Cowperwood then, seems a superman not only in the business world, but in his love affairs as well. With seemingly inhuman callousness, he seduces and dispenses with women as though they were a series of stock transactions. The marriage bond means nothing to him. As soon as he loses interest in one woman he turns unconcernedly to another. In Chapter XX of the novel, "Man and Superman", Dreiser contrasts Cowperwood with the husband of one of his mistresses whom, of course, he seduced. When the weak husband discovers that Cowperwood has been making love to his wife, he angrily confronts the financier. However, the confident and resourceful Cowperwood is unabashed, and he easily intimidates and finally buys the husband off with a trip to

Europe so that he can carry on with the man's wife as he likes.

What is significant in the above-mentioned list of women is the association of sexuality with wealth, youth and beauty. Richard Lehan echoes this thought. He sees the pattern of The Titan as similar to the earlier novels. There is the same emphasis on youth as a moment of splendid possibility and hope. The city, especially Chicago, encourages the youthful spirit and intensifies the hope and the possibility of success for all who possess the spirit. Lehan observes that Cowperwood's main struggle is to keep the spirit of youth alive. "He must always have youth, the illusion of beauty" (The Titan, 205). This stress on youth is repeated at least four times in the novel. A little later Dreiser says of his hero, "it might have been said of him that youth and hope in women - particularly youth when combined with beauty and ambition in a girl - touched him" (The Titan, 214); later he asks: "Why should this lure of youth continue to possess him?" (The Titan, 358). Later still, Dreiser goes further to serenade, "youth, youth - the spirit, for instance, that was in Berenice Fleming" (The Titan, 499). In fact, this beauty is an illusion because it is inextricably linked to wealth and the material, and Cowperwood's belief that with wealth he can buy anything he wants.[46] Cowperwood's commitment to beauty thus, as Dreiser implies, stems from his desire to preserve his youth, keep the world perpetually young, and hence stave off old age and the inevitability of death. For this purpose Cowperwood's major objective becomes the acquisition of great wealth - the realization of his American dream of great empire. Because his financial and sexual nature are in many ways one and the same, The Titan moves back and forth

between business and sex.

In the field of finance, Cowperwood possesses craft enough to gain control, and by floating bonds or watering stock, he can push a corporation's financial potential far past its observable limit. In business he rapidly gains control of most of the city's street railways excelling his business rivals in speed, discernment and energy. In the newspapers he meets a deadly enemy who opposes him from the very start of his career in the west. Cowperwood decides that he will defy not only the press, but the public, the politicians and the city's leading figures in business and industry.

When the opposition party (that is the Republicans) wins the election, it brings to power an anti-Cowperwood council supported by Cowperwood's opponents - Norman Schryhart; Anson Merril; Hosmer Hand; and Timothy Arneel, all of whom join hands with Truman Leslie MacDonald, the managing editor of the Inquirer, in an attempt to cripple Cowperwood and permanently prevent him from returning to power. Moreover, the council is presided over by a religious Republican mayor, who is "now supposed to carry out the theories of the respectable and the virtuous" (The Titan, 319). In the face of this opposition, and in order not to let his enemies strike at him unprepared, Cowperwood considers what sort of influence he could bring to bear on the newly elected mayor, Chafee Thayer Sluss.

Chafee Thayer Sluss, in Dreiser's terms, is "a rag-bag, moralistic ass" (The Titan, 324). A pagan at heart, he lacks Cowperwood's courage

to follow his instincts:

> On Sunday, when he went to church with his wife, he felt that religion was essential and purifying. In his own business he found himself frequently confronted by various little flaws of logic relating to undue profits, misrepresentation and the like; but say what you would, nevertheless and not withstanding, God was God, morality was superior, the church was important. It was wrong to yield to one's impulses, as he found it so fascinating to do. One should be better than his neighbour, or pretend to be (The Titan, 324).

Recognizing Sluss's vulnerability, Cowperwood lures him into a lecherous liaison and afterwards threatens his exposure. Sluss thereafter is no longer a threat, and in the long run he is compelled to come to terms and do exactly what Cowperwood wants. Moreover, to have his financial power made known all over Europe, and to mislead his foes about his financial situation, Cowperwood makes a gift of an expensive telescope, with its observatory housing, to the University of Chicago. At the time the gift is made, Mars dominates the skies, a reminder that Cowperwood himself is a god of battles. The gift also appeals to Cowperwood as a chance to press man's inquiries into the mysteries of the universe, and the riddle of man's origin. Above all, by this gift, Cowperwood has secured his financial status with the banks of both Chicago and New York.

Cowperwood's advance, however, does not stop at the point of winning victory over Sluss. Once again several of Chicago's principal financial figures - like Schryhart, Merril, Hand, Arneel, Leslie

MacDonald of the Inquirer, and Editor Haguenin of the Press, - are all determined to unseat Cowperwood because he is threatening their personal empires. Of these men, only two have been hurt in their personal lives through Cowperwood's personal adventurings. Editor Haguenin, whose daughter has an affair with Cowperwood, is resentful but ineffectual. Hosmer Hand, whose young wife is another of Cowperwood's paramours, is outraged and revengeful. The others, Schryhart, Merril and Arneel, losers in the financial struggle, are full of envy and bear Cowperwood ill will because of his tactics, subtlety and successful scheming. Dreiser takes pains to specify that what hurts Hand most of all in the panic and collapse of the American Match plot against Cowperwood, is the fact that Hand loses nearly $1,500,000; this is what turns his soul "gray as a bat's wing" (The Titan, 408). However, all these men are incensed with Cowperwood, and decide to take action against him.

In Chapter XLIX, "Mount Olympus", Cowperwood is summoned to a meeting held by his business rivals, where he is threatened with financial ruin if he does not co-operate with them. As always, one step ahead of everybody, Cowperwood has anticipated their scheme and protected himself financially. With a jaunty defiance, Cowperwood informs the local gods of finance that, contrary to what they believed when they summoned him, it was they who were at his mercy:

> '... I know how you four gentlemen have been gambling in this stock, and what your probable losses are, and that it is to save yourselves from further loss that you have decided to make me the scapegoat. I want to tell you here'. ... 'You can't do it. ... If you open the day by calling a single one of my loans before I

> am ready to pay it, I'll gut every bank from here to the river. You'll have panic, all the panic you want. Good evening, gentlemen' (The Titan, 427-428).

Notice the defiant mood, the challenging attitude and the warning accent - all are indicative of Cowperwood's greater strength in the face of this adversity.

Dreiser's main structural problem in this second part of the Trilogy is to continue to heighten Cowperwood's superman stature. His strategy in doing so is to describe Cowperwood as a man of force, "strong, hopeful, {and} urgent" (The Titan, 22). To Aileen he seems "a kind of superman, ... handsome, powerful, hopeful, not so very much older than herself now, impelled by some blazing internal force which harried him on and on" (The Titan, 461); and to Berenice he looks also like "a superman, a half-god or demi-gorgon." So how "could the ordinary rules of life or the accustomed paths of men be expected to control him?" (The Titan, 519). Cowperwood considers himself an "Ishmael" or an "ex-convict" (The Titan, 10), and his rivals see in him a Napoleon who is going to lay siege to Chicago, possess all its railways, and rise to far greater power than any he had enjoyed before. As he sweeps everything before his will he strikes at his rivals "dictating terms to the principal financial figures of the city, standing up trig and resolute, smiling in their faces and telling them in so many ways to go to the devil" (The Titan, 430). Indeed, he is "a very lion of a man" (The Titan, 430). After he gains his monopoly of the street railways and has built up the Loop, Cowperwood towers over the city like a colossus. In the commercial heart of the city he truly becomes "a

figure of giant significance" (The Titan, 465), a "monument based on a rock of great strength" (The Titan, 524), striding always forward with an ironic intention to bend the laws of the state to his own ends, and holding fast to his attitude of "Promethean defiance, which had never yet brooked defeat" (The Titan, 520).

Thus far Cowperwood has one major struggle left in Chicago. This last confrontation, similar to the one he had in Philadelphia at the end of The Financier, ends his carrer in Chicago and concludes The Titan. Specifically, the final chapters of The Titan detail Cowperwood's ruthless attempt to attain a fifty year franchise on his streetcar lines. This move would assure the future prosperity of the streetcar lines and make them a marketable commodity which could be sold at an immense profit.

The street railways of Chicago are the prize. Cowperwood has to fight for control of them with all the ferocity of a hungry lion and all the guile of a serpent. Once this final victory is achieved, Cowperwood, "like a canny wolf" can prowl "in a forest of his own creation" (The Titan, 394). Unfortunately, this time all his financial rivals, his political opponents and even the angry populace, have concerted their efforts in a final attempt to stop Cowperwood. The public outcry and the rise of the people become decisive. What motivates the citizenry this time is perhaps less the idealism of Swanson, the Governor, than their wish for a comfortable, safe and cheaper streetcar service. However, Governor Swanson, a man who cannot be bought, is the decisive factor. When Cowperwood tries to bribe the

Governor, Swanson, "a dynamic presence," vetoes the bill for long term franchising (The Titan, 476). It is Governor Swanson's unshakable integrity, supported by public opinion, which leads to Cowperwood's defeat before the Chicago city council. Cowperwood's dreams of total control vanish, and he must, as the author indicates, "be made to succumb, to yield to the forces of law and order" (The Titan, 512).

Cowperwood succumbs by the end of The Titan to the counterbalance of what Dreiser terms in an essay the "Equation Inevitable" - the world's natural cyclical movement toward balance.[47] In this essay Dreiser argues that "life in every form has tended to evolve from the simple to the complex, and only through a vast complexity or organisation has it managed to attain this spectacle of things which we call life or beauty - division of itself, as it were."[48] Dreiser explains further that if life as we see it is to go on, an "equation between matter and force and the elements to which apparently they give rise, must be struck, a balance attained," because the "slightest disturbance of the existing equations which produce life as we see it, ... ends in monstrosities or confusion, and life as we know it ceases."[49] So according to Dreiser, a "Rockefeller," or a "Napoleon" - or even a Charles Tyson Yerkes might be created; but created also was the force which would limit his power and nullify his illusory dream of absolute dominion. This balancing force, from Dreiser's point of view, is equally uncontrollable because over it "neither the humanitarian nor the idealist, ... has any control whatever."[50] "Under this same controlling equation" any man might then be a "Colossus and bestride the world {but} without upsetting the equation ultimately."[51] By the end of

The Titan, Dreiser asserts that "a balance is invariably struck wherein the mass subdues the individual or the individaul the mass - for the time being. For, behold, the sea is ever dancing or raging" (The Titan, 542). This is because, as Dreiser explains, "the strong must not be too strong; the weak not too weak." And the ultimate, therefore, is an "equation" (The Titan, 542).

In the context of Dreiser's equation, Yerkes - whose fictitious name is Cowperwood - has been created and employed by Nature as a tool toward completing a massive system of public transit which would continue to yield lasting benefit long after its creator's departure. Dreiser concludes The Titan on this theme of a final judgment: "Rushing like a great comet to the zenith, his path a blazing trail, Cowperwood did for the hour illuminate the terrors and wonders of individuality. But for him also the eternal equation - the pathos of the discovery that even giants are but pygmies, and that an ultimate balance must be struck" (The Titan, 542). Nature thus had created this symbol of achievement and lured the individual with material recompense and dreams of immortality to produce a giant traction system for the public welfare. Nature then introduces the equalising forces which annihilate the individual sparing only his contribution to material progress, leaving the cosmic balance undisturbed.

However, Cowperwood's defeat at the end of the second part is not an ultimate failure, and all is not lost for him. On the very night he suffers this material defeat he gains Berenice, who finally makes the

decision to become Frank's wife. Dreiser introduces Berenice into the life of Cowperwood to provide the latter with a link to art and nature. In other words, the life of art, beauty and nature must become a part of Cowperwood's life. The superman figure, who possesses enormous strength of will and individuality, must be tempered by a relationship with the finer things of life. These finer things including art, beauty, and nature, - which as always Drieser himself seems to struggle to understand - are typified by a girl like Berenice Fleming.

When Berenice was first introduced, she "was deeply, dramatically, urgently conscious of the value of her personality in itself, not as connected with any inherited social standing, but of its innate worth, and of the artistry and wonder of her body" (The Titan, 350). Here is a girl of sixteen who is aware of both spirit and flesh, mind and body. She is not overwhelmed by the other "inmate of the Misses Brewster's School for Girls" (The Titan, 349), and even though she recognizes the value of the school's "social import ... she was superior to it" (The Titan, 350). Berenice's allegiance is to a totally different world. That world, as the author observes, contains a "music-rack full of classic music and song collections, a piano, a shelf of favourite books, painting-materials, various athletic implements, and several other types of Greek dancing-tunics ... " (The Titan, 354). Berenice is reflective yet reasoning, creative yet active.

Berenice belongs to nature and her affinities are always with the natural world. It is a world that Cowperwood at first has difficulty with, but which soon entrances him. In the Pocono Mountains, Dreiser

shows how Copwerwood feels in the presence of such a girl:

> Cowperwood, previously engrossed in financial speculations, was translated, as by the wave of a fairy wand, into another realm where birds and fledglings and grass and the light winds of heaven were more important than brick and stone and stocks and bonds (The Titan, 389-390).

When later Berenice observes Cowperwood's splendid mansion in New York, she is not overcome by the opulence it suggests. Her first reaction "awakened her to an understanding of the spirit of art that occupied the centre of Cowperwood's iron personality and caused her to take a real interest in him" (The Titan, 433). Berenice perceives that Cowperwood's inner self possesses the potential for a life besides the material. This is what causes her real interest; it is not the wealth and prestige that his life style promises. John McAleer in his study of the imagery surrounding Berenice suggests how exceptional Berenice appears in every attribute. He points to her description as a goddess being "the living embodiment of the 'Winged Victory'." Further, he notes the images of flux intermingling with that of nature to suggest her affinities are not with Carrie Meeber but with Jennie Gerhardt.[52] Nature, not the material world, is her kingdom. In the kingdom of this teen-ager, Cowperwood comes to see "clearly, as within a chalice-like nimbus, that the ultimate end of fame, power, vigour was beauty, and that beauty was a compound of the taste, the emotion, the innate culture, passion, and dreams of a woman like Berenice Fleming" (The Titan, 463).

Cowperwood, however, finds it difficult to interpret and understand a life other than one devoted to wealth. What taste, emotion, culture, passion, and dreams exactly are escapes Cowperwood. He knows they are in a woman like Berenice, but he cannot explain the essence of her life. Cowperwood knows he is greatly under the influence of this woman, and for the first time in all his dealings with women, the female does have the upper hand over him.[53] Although Cowperwood wins Berenice on the night of his defeat, Dreiser admits that all the treasures his titan was laying up in money and art would not bring him peace, contentment or happiness. The novel closes and Cowperwood is "forever suffering the goad of a restless heart - for him was no ultimate peace, no real understanding, but only hunger, thirst and wonder. Wealth! Wealth! Wealth!" (The Titan, 542-543).

Survivor and Non-Survivor

Farfrae and Cowperwood, although they are well adapted for survival, in comparison with the non-survivor Michael Henchard, are not characters of particular human complexity who change and develop in the course of experience. They are embodiments of a philosophic concept of power or force with little capacity for love, suffering or growth. Michael Millgate asserts this belief when he points out the failure of Cowperwood to develop as a character:

> Cowperwood, in fact, scarcely grows at all. He springs fully-armed into the opening pages of The Financier: watching the lobster eat the squid he learns at once the single principle that is to guide all his future conduct. The attempt in The Stoic to give a new direction to his character ends in disaster. Dreiser

> eventually kills him off, in a rather abrupt manner, and turns his attention to Berenice as a more satisfactory vehicle for his changed ideas.[54]

Among the three characters, Henchard, Farfrae and Cowperwood, it is Henchard, despite his inability to adapt himself for survival, who is more admirable because of his intense feelings, his sudden likings for people, his outbursts of temper even as a young man, and his great sympathy. All of these are manifestations of "his one talent of energy" (Mayor, 169). And this talent, particularly as it operates within the world of feeling, is what attracts us to him initially and keeps us interested in him throughout the novel.

What makes Henchard the more admirable is his ability to grow as when he acknowledges his faults and imposes punishment upon himself for them. It is really Henchard himself who decides what his punishment will be: "'I - Cain - go alone as I deserve - an outcast and a vagabond'" (Mayor, 239). There is perhaps no other single statement in the text that so clearly and effectively embodies the essence of Henchard's ultimate greatness. Henchard imposes exile on himself as a punishment for his past impulsive acts. His comparison of himself with Cain, as he leaves Elizabeth-Jane and Casterbridge, intensifies the grandeur of Henchard's gesture: he has judged and sentenced himself harshly. But more than any other factor, the quality which most elevates Henchard's character in the final stages of his life is his attainment of a self-knowledge that shows he has grown spiritually as a result of his sufferings.

Without a doubt, Henchard in his defeat acquires a kind of

nobility. Even though he eventually dies penniless in a desolate hovel, it is Henchard who grows in dignity. His will reveals the perspective Henchard has developed by the end of his life. In his last communication with humanity, he attempts to obliterate any concern for or memory of him by others. Henchard has indeed, arrived at a different appraisal of the world's attention than he had when, for example, he played the fool at the reception of the Royal Personage.

What makes Henchard the more admirable is that he has also gained in compassion and sensitivity: the first point of his will, "that Elizabeth-Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on account of me" (Mayor, 254), reveals that he does not want to trouble Elizabeth-Jane's happiness. It also reveals that he suspects she might have enough feeling left for him - partly because of guilt about having been so angry with him - that she could be truly upset at hearing of his death. He does not want to cause her any pain, even though she has caused a great deal. In this, Henchard has truly attained a more perfectly formed soul than he had before. He has learned something from his life, and does not just lash out in bitterness at the world on his death-bed. Similar characters to Henchard in Dreiser's Trilogy are those with human weaknesses, particularly the Butlers, with their passions and human longings, their doubts and pathetic illusions. It is in their weaknesses that Dreiser's characters come alive. Cowperwood, for all the power he generates and the sparks he throws off, remains a machine, and like Farfrae, he strides briskly and mechanically: Farfrae through the pages of The Mayor, and Cowperwood through the pages of The Financier and The Titan.

1. Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Biology (London, 1864), Vol.I, p.445.

2. Ibid. 445.

3. Ibid. 445.

4. Ibid. 455.

5. Howard O.Brogan, "Science and Narrative Structure in Austen, Hardy, and Woolf", Nineteenth- Century Fiction, 11 (1957), 280.

6. Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy (London, 1968), p.84.

7. Thomas Hardy, The Mayor of Casterbridge (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), p.121. All further page references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically within the text.

8. John Paterson, "The Mayor of Casterbridge as Tragedy", Victorian Studies, 3 (1959-1960), 156-157.

9. D.A.Dike, "A Modern Oedipus: The Mayor of Casterbridge", Essays in Criticism, 2 (1952), 172-173.

10. Richard Lehan, Theodore Dreiser: His World and His Novels (London, 1969), p.101.

11. Julian Moynahan, "The Mayor of Casterbridge and the Old Testament's First Book of Samuel: A Study of Some Literary Relationships", Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, Vol.71 (1956), 129.

12. Douglas Brown, Thomas Hardy (London, 1954), p.65.

13. Dike, "A Modern Oedipus: The Mayor of Casterbridge", 178.

14. Paterson, "The Mayor of Casterbridge as Tragedy", 157.

15. Ibid. 157.

16. Ian Gregor, The Great Web : The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction (London, 1974), p.122.

17. Howe, Thomas Hardy, p.89.

18. Dale Kramer, Thomas Hardy : The Forms of Tragedy (Detroit, 1975), p.82.

19. Dale Kramer, "Character and the Cycle of Change in The Mayor of Casterbridge", Tennessee Studies in Literature, XVI (1971), 116.

20. Dike, "A Modern Oedipus : The Mayor of Casterbridge", 176.

21. Ibid. 176.

22. See Theodore Dreiser, Dawn (London, 1931), pp.253, 438.

23. As quoted in Robert Penn Warren, Homage to Theodore Dreiser (New York, 1971), p.75.

24. Philip L.Gerber, "The Financier Himself : Dreiser and C.T.Yerkes", Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, 88 (1973), 116.

25. Warren, Homage to Theodore Dreiser, p.73.

26. W.A.Swanberg, Dreiser (New York, 1965), p.164.

27. Nathan Glick, "Theodore Dreiser : A Reappraisal", Dialogue, 71-74 (Number : 3, 1986), 48.

28. Charles Child Walcutt, "The Three Stages of Theodore Dreiser's Naturalism", Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, 55 (1940), 279; rpt. in Kazin and Shapiro, eds., The Stature of Theodore Dreiser (Bloomington, 1965), p.258.

29. F.O. Matthiessen, Theodore Dreiser (London, 1951), p.132.

30. Theodore Dreiser, The Financier (London, 1927), p.14. All further page references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically within the text.

31. Jack E.Wallace, "The Comic Voice in Dreiser's Cowperwood Narrative ", American Literature, 53 (1981), 64.

32. Charles Shapiro, Theodore Dreiser : Our Bitter Patriot (Carbondale, 1962), p.33.

33. Philip L.Gerber, Theodore Dreiser (Boston, 1964), p.103.

34. Warren, Homage to Theodore Dreiser, p.69.

35. Matthiessen, Theodore Dreiser, p.141.

36. Donald Pizer, The Novels of Theodore Dreiser : A Critical Study (Minneapolis, 1976), p.167.

37. Theodore Dreiser, The Titan (London, 1928), p.14. All further page references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically within the text.

38. John J.McAleer, Theodore Dreiser : An Introduction and Interpretation (New York, 1968), p.107.

39. Herbert Spencer, First Principles (London, 1862), p.235.

40. Ibid. 245.

41. Ibid. 258.

42. Ibid. 260.

43. As quoted in Philip L.Gerber, "The Financier Himself: Dreiser and C.T.Yerkes", 116.

44. Mattheissen, Theodore Dreiser, p.146.

45. Gerber, Theodore Dreiser, p.103.

46. Lehan, Theodore Dreiser : His World and His Novels, pp.106-107.

47. Theodore Dreiser, "Equation Inevitable", Hey, Rub-A-Dub-Dub! A Book of the Mystery and Wonder and Terror of Life (London, 1931), pp.162-187.

48. Ibid. 171.

49. Ibid. 174.

50. Ibid. 170.

51. Ibid. 184.

52. McAleer, Theodore Dreiser : An Introduction and Interpretation, pp.111-112.

53. Philip L.Gerber, "The Alabaster Protégé : Dreiser and Berenice Fleming ", American Literature, 43 (1971-1972), 221.

54. Michael Millgate, "Theodore Dreiser and the American Financier", Studi Americani, 7 (1961), 136.

Chapter IV

The Conflict Between the Flesh and the Spirit in the Characters of Jude and Eugene: Jude the Obscure, and The "Genius".

The conflict between the flesh and the spirit is certainly a major theme in the Old and New Testament, as it is in much nineteenth century English and American literature.

A few years before he wrote Jude the Obscure, Thomas Hardy remarked a "woeful fact - that the human race is too extremely developed for its corporeal conditions, the nerves being evolved to an activity abnormal in such an environment. ... This planet does not supply the materials for happiness to higher existences."[1] And in his preface to the first edition of Jude the Obscure, Hardy explained his intention somewhat defensively:

> For a novel addressed by a man to men and women of full age; which attempts to deal unaffectedly with the fret and fever, derision and disaster, that may press in the wake of the strongest passion known to humanity; to tell, without a mincing of words, of a deadly war waged between flesh and spirit; and to point the tragedy of unfulfilled aims, I am not aware that there is anything in the handling to which exception can be taken.

Furthermore, in the postcript to the preface to the edition of 1912, Hardy remarked, without saying whether he agreed or not, that a

German reviewer had seen Sue Bridehead as "the first delineation in fiction of the woman who was coming into notice in her thousands every year - the woman of the feminist movement - the slight, pale 'bachelor' girl - the intellectualized, emancipated bundle of nerves that modern conditions were producing, mainly in cities as yet; ..." But obviously this is not an exhaustive statement on the novel's essential meaning. The conflicts between the flesh and the spirit, body and soul, vice and virtue, the sordid and the ideal, passion and reason are clues powerfully worked into the Hardyesque theme of the relation between instinct and reason, simplicity and civilization, nature and artifice.

Hardy's Jude the Obscure (1895), and Dreiser's The "Genius" (1915), then, dramatize humanity's ancient battle between the flesh and the spirit embodied in Jude's dual attraction to the physical allure of Arabella and the spiritual elevation of Sue's presence, and in Eugene's dual attraction to the allure of Angela Blue and the spiritual superiority of Suzanne Dale. This ancient conflict is further worked into Jude the Obscure by two contrasting sets of historical images: the classical and sensual versus the biblical and more non-corporeal. These two levels of imagery, because of their historical aura, sustain the idea that Jude's valiant struggle is one which has, indeed, engaged humanity throughout the centuries. Added to that, Jude the Obscure, and The "Genius" represent Hardy's and Dreiser's fullest and frankest treatment of man's bondage to his sexual impulses.

Jude the Obscure is Hardy's last and his most extraordinary

novel. Jude, an orphan and poor country boy with visions of academic glory, escapes from his native "ugly" village, after some dogged self-education in the classics, to Christminster, which represents his spiritual and intellectual ideal. Christminster, "'a castle, manned by scholarship and religion',"[2] never gives him entry to the university and Jude remains trapped between his instinct and intellect until his intentional death. Before leaving his native region, Jude had been tricked into marriage with a grossly sensual girl who had appealed to his own very real sensuality, and the account of the dreaming idealist caught in the snare of his own physical nature is, indeed, one of the most powerful things that nineteenth century fiction has to show. Arabella, wedded and bedded, soon breaks off relations with Jude and leaves for Australia, and Jude shortly afterwards makes his journey toward the city of Christminster which he sees as enfolded in a halo of holiness where his dream of achievement lies. In Christminster, Jude meets his emancipated intellectual cousin, Sue Bridehead, and in the course of their relationship together Hardy probes some of the most puzzling paradoxes of love and sex, spirit and character, intellect and illusion. After her marriage to a middle-aged schoolmaster, Sue is carried off by Jude with whom she lives for several years, takes charge of Arabella's little boy, and produces two children of her own. The son of Arabella and Jude, Little Father Time, eventually hangs his stepbrother and stepsister. After this tragedy, Sue gives in to conventional religion and rejoins her husband out of a sheer sense of duty. As soon as Sue leaves Jude, Arabella takes over, and remarries a man whose heart is broken over the loss of his beloved. In the summer following his marriage Jude dies alone listening to the hurrahs that

greet the winning crews of the boat races on the Isis.

Jude the Obscure depicts "without a mincing of words," "a deadly war waged between flesh and spirit;" in a similar way, The "Genius" records this tug of war that tears Eugene Witla apart: the contest between flesh and spirit, art and business, and the artist's struggle for personal and artistic integrity despite the lure of the flesh and the impulse toward fame and fortune, wealth and women. The novel, as Thomas P. Riggio points out, is "a form of spiritual autobiography that probes the nature of the artist as Dreiser, Dreiser as the artist."[3]

Although The "Genius" follows the outline of Dreiser's life up to 1911, it seems that Dreiser has made much of the story of Jude the Obscure into his own. Like Jude, the main character, Eugene Tennyson Witla, is an artist whose artistic bent manifests itself early in life through "an intense sense of beauty."[4] When he is first introduced as a combination of "emotion, fire, longing," and to "a notable extent artistic" (The "Genius", 11) we get the impression that the boy, like Jude, is going to develop into some kind of painter or sculptor. Growing up in a small Midwestern town, Alexandria, Illinois, Eugene responds to the large possibilities and freedom of urban life in Chicago and New York, and achieves recognition as a painter of picturesque and dramatic city scenes and slums. At the same time, he "takes possession of a series of mistresses which threatens to rival Cowperwood's harem."[5] As he moves from one mistress to another, he finds himself moving from one illusion to another until he makes the fatal error, which plagues

him for the rest of the book, of marrying a country girl, Angela Blue, who proves too conservative and conventional for his needs and artistic predilections. However, soon after their wedding, because of "over-indulgence" in the luxury of love and sex, Eugene suffers a nervous breakdown, and spends a number of troubled years convalescing. Once Eugene regains his health and manages to rebuild his life, he changes direction from art to advertising and soon transforms himself into a businessman and a successful editor. Once again he indulges in an extended series of passionate affairs with several women. As a result of an affair with a pretty eighteen-year-old, Suzanne Dale, who represents his ideal in love, and his frantic attempt to run off with her, he loses his position, his job, his social standing and his investment in the "Blue Sea". However, as Sue Bridehead deserts Jude after the loss of their children, Suzanne deserts Eugene after the loss of his employment and his social position. Angela, his wife dies in childbirth, and Eugene tries to re-establish himself as an artist. As Jude's dream of Sue fades, similarly, Eugene's dream of Suzanne fades away, and for three years he lives in despair of the spirit, wandering aimlessly till he apparently finds temporary ease for his restless heart and comfort for his guilty conscience in the church of Christ Scientist.

Structurally speaking, the novel falls into three chronological parts. Book I "Youth", takes us through Eugene Witla's adolescence, his groping toward an artist's career, his boyish amours, and his engagement to Angela Blue. In this first part, it is clear that Eugene, like Jude, succumbs from the very first to the lure of the flesh as

typified by Margaret Duff and Angela Blue. Book II "Struggle", narrates Eugene's marriage to Angela, his infidelities to his wife, his emotional miseries, his early recognition as a painter, and the temptation of the material world and commercial success. Book III "Revolt", dramatizes Eugene's idealized and thwarted romanticizing of the eighteen-year-old beauty, Suzanne Dale, his sorrow over the death of his wife in childbirth, and his acceptance of parental responsibility for the motherless child, and the seeming resumption of his work as a painter.

The Similarities Between the Two Novels

Jude Fawley - the last descendant of the Fawley family - and Eugene Witla have, in fact, much in common with each other. Both men are endowed with intellectual and artistic gifts. Both Jude and Eugene are heroes with romantic ideals: Jude's is to get entry to Christminster, and be a student, whereas Eugene's is to become an artist and pursue the ideal of beauty. Thus both aspire to the achievement of higher aims: Jude wants to become doctor of divinity, and Eugene wants to be a distinguished artist. Both grow discontented with their natural surroundings: Jude with Marygreen, "'how ugly it is here!'" (Jude, 13), and Eugene with his native town of Alexandria; and both venture to the city. The city for both is exciting: for Jude, the city and especially Christminster - Oxford - represents a source of delight and excitement because it is a city of "light" and learning (Jude, 23), a city of his childhood dream, and "the centre of the universe" (Jude, 254), where "the tree of knowledge grows" (Jude, 23). In fact, the city for Jude proves cruel and indifferent. Similarly, the city - Chicago - for Eugene, is exciting because it "put vitality into almost every wavering heart: it made the beginner dream dreams " (The

"Genius", 39), and at the same time, the city is "cruel", a centre of "struggle" (The "Genius", 39). Thus each hero's dream is centred in a city, and each feels the need for the city to fulfil his aims. Both heroes find in the city they desire to enter a release for their passions in work and love. The city for both Jude and Eugene sometimes seems illusory, with a mirage-like quality: for Jude, "near objects put on the hues and shapes of chimaeras" (Jude, 19); likewise, for Eugene, the city "was running with a tide of people which represented the youth, the illusions, the untrained aspirations, of millions of souls" (The "Genius", 39). Both heroes' views of the city as a centre of "light", delight and "dreams" proves deceptive: Jude, as soon as the glory that surrounds his Christminster begins to fade into the light of common day, realizes that the city belongs not to a select band of dons and students but to ordinary people:

> the town life was a book of humanity infinitely more palpitating, varied, and compendious than the gown life. These struggling men and women before him were the reality of Christminster, though they knew little of Christ or Minster. ... The floating population of students and teachers, who did not know both in a way, were not Christminster in a local sense at all (Jude, 96).

Similarly, for Eugene, once he loses Suzanne, the city appears to fade before his eyes: the "buildings were high and silent - receding from him in a way. ... A mirage dissolved into its native nothingness" (The "Genius", 678). Despite their eventual disillusionment, the journey to the city thus represents not only a geographical journey, but a journey into consciousness as both heroes

discover the reality of the city and as a result grow in self-knowledge.

The similarities do not stop here, however. Further resemblances strike us as we find both heroes are sexually driven; their enormous sense of desire makes them always restless. Because of their powerful sexual nature, both heroes seem to be dissatisfied with one woman just as they are dissatisfied with their place in the community. In both heroes, the sexual drive holds greater sway than reason, and is often seen as antithetical to the elevated aims they have set for themselves. The marriage of both men is, therefore, motivated more by desire than by love.

Ironically, both, Jude and Eugene, marry at a crucial point of their lives. But the marriage of both men is nothing more than the fulfilment of a social obligation: Jude marries the callous Arabella - after his seduction by her - out of a sense of "honour", and Eugene marries the sexually appealing Angela, who has been coached in the art of seduction by her sister Marieta, out of a sheer sense of "duty". Marrying thus, both men are, in fact, trapped, as they find themselves husbands to wives they do not love and with whom they do not have anything in common. And surprisingly, both women represent something that both men are trying to grow beyond. The marriage of both men, however, ends disastrously: Arabella leaves Jude after auctioning off her wedding furniture, and Angela dies in childbirth. In their pursuit of the ideal, both men move back and forth between the flesh and spirit: after meeting, marrying and breaking off with Arabella, Jude moves to

Christminster which represents his spiritual ideal, and there he meets his cousin Sue who stands as the embodiment of his idealized love. Following his rejection by the city, Jude decides to become a minister and starts teaching at the age of thirty, ("an age which much attracted him as being that of his exemplar {Jesus Christ}") (Jude, 104), but Jude's attempt is interrupted by meeting the "tigress" Arabella, and they spend a night together in a third class inn at Aldbrickham (Jude, 147). On the morning of that night Jude feels ashamed of the hours he has spent with Arabella; nevertheless, he still aspires to follow the career of a clergyman. But his "unauthorised love" (Jude, 146) for Sue prevents him from following such a "purgatorial course" (Jude, 103) especially when he attempts to release her from the "gin" of her marriage to Phillotson. Soon afterwards he sets his theological and religious texts on fire to avoid being a hypocrite, and admits that he has too many passions to make a good clergyman. When Sue comes to live with Jude after leaving Phillotson, Jude blackmails her into having a sexual relationship with him and threatens to see Arabella if she does not submit to his sexual demands. When Sue leaves Jude after the loss of their children and Arabella takes over, Jude gives up the struggle and puts an end to a "feverish life", which in his belief "'ought never to have been begun!'" (Jude, 311).

Similarly, Eugene moves from his native town to Chicago to cultivate his artistic gifts, and there he moves from one mistress to another: from Margaret Duff to Ruby Kenny, from Angela Blue to Christina Channing, from Frieda Roth to Carlotta Wilson and finally, trying to

find his ideal in love - the source of his inspiration - to Suzanne Dale. But Eugene never advances beyond the image of Stella Appleton of Alexandria. He is fixated on his image of the eighteen year old girl, ("the only one true place of comfort,") and "the spring time of love."[6] "The illusion of desire," and "the sheer animal magnetism of beauty" (The "Genius", 274) prove so powerful for Eugene that he fails to become a good artist devoted to "some noble and super-human purpose" (The "Genius", 238). Both heroes, therefore, find it difficult to reconcile their essential selves with the elevated aims they aspire to attain, and both are consequently torn between their nature crying for gratification and their unfettered spiritual longings. Both are betrayed by their ideal in love: Jude by Sue who gets religion and leaves him for Phillotson, and Eugene by Suzanne who falls out of love and forgets him. The loss of Sue and Suzanne is disastrous for Jude and Eugene : Sue precipitates Jude's tragic end, and Suzanne precipitates the destruction of Eugene's marriage to Angela leading to the loss of his investments in the "Blue Sea". Both heores find the ideal never real, and the real never ideal. Both grow in self-knowledge as they recognize their flaws: Jude admits the defects of his character and says, "my two Arch Enemies you know - my weakness for womankind and my impulse to strong liquor" (Jude, 280). And Eugene recognizes in the man who unfolds his personal story "a case paralleled {to} his own", and that his great "weakness was women" (The "Genius", 692, 691). Both heroes end alone and abandoned: Jude by Sue and Arabella especially in the days leading up to his death, and Eugene by Suzanne who leaves him, and by Angela who dies in childbirth. Despite their defeat by mundane values, nevertheless, both remain wholly committed to their ideals.

Jude the Obscure

Of all Hardy's heroes - Clym, Tess, Henchard, Giles - Jude is a man apart. He has abandoned Wessex and can no longer return to the natural world as a refuge. Instead he must create his values in a world that seems to lack any of its own.

Jude's alienation and suffering begin early in life. Unlike Clym Yeobright, who leaves his natural surroundings deliberately and then decides to return, Jude seems hardly ever to have felt a unity with nature or with his fellow man. As a child at Marygreen Jude is already described as having "felt the pricks of life somewhat before his time" (Jude, 11). His solitude and loneliness are apparent from the beginning, for Jude is an orphan. His aunt Drusilla makes abundantly clear to him that his existence is an "unnecessary" one. She tells him: "'It would ha' been a blessing if Goddy-mighty had took thee too, wi' thy mother and father, poor useless boy'" (Jude, 12).

The child Jude's isolation from his own kind causes him to feel a bond with the rooks which he is supposedly engaged in driving away from Farmer Troutham's field. In this place of solitude, described as a "wide and lonely depression in the general level of the upland" (Jude, 13), the birds seem to be "the only friends he could claim as being in the least degree interested in him" (Jude, 14). But this "magic thread of fellow-feeling" (Jude, 14) leads only to more unhappiness when Troutham invades Jude's lonely Eden in order to give him a beating. The boy's only offence has been to feel sympathy with and give sustenance to

his fellow creatures. Although Jude himself is not entirely aware of the irony involved in the circumstances of his punishment, the narrator implies that there exists in his mind a vague, inarticulate realization of "the flaw in the terrestrial scheme, by which what was good for God's birds was bad for God's gardener" (Jude, 15).

Moreover, Jude is described as "a boy who could not himself bear to hurt anything" (Jude, 15). His sympathy seems universal; it extends not only to rooks, but to trees, earthworms, and all living things. His extreme sensitivity is referred to as a "weakness of character" (Jude, 15). But this phrase is immediately qualified by the parenthetical comment "as it may be called" (Jude, 15), which suggests that Jude's "weakness" is to be considered such only in a limited context. His sensitivity to suffering and his consciousness of moral disorder are, indeed, handicaps which will cause him to "ache a good deal" (Jude, 15), and to experience a sense of futility which makes his very life seem "unnecessary".

As the author endows the boy with feelings of pity for birds, rooks and earthworms, he enters into his mind to endow him with intellectual and artistic gifts so that when he is first introduced we get the impression that the young boy will become fairly distinguished either as a scholar of divinity or as a sculptor. Christminster, the city of faith and "light", religion and learning where "the tree of knowledge grows" is, in Wordsworth's phrase, the glory and the dream which captures his imagination as a young boy. When he first glimpses it at a distance surrounded by light, it resembles

"the heavenly Jerusalem" (Jude, 18). Yet this view of the city is deceptive, for the scene is engulfed in a heavy mist. By his description Hardy suggests the mirage-like quality of Jude's vision, as "near objects put on the hues and shapes of chimaeras" (Jude, 19). The sight of Christminster as it appears to Jude as a child sums up in a vividly realized image the qualities which that city will have in his later life: apparent intellectual enlightenment, remoteness, a vague spirituality, and finally a fundamental falseness. The mirage-like glory that surrounds the city will soon begin to fade "into the light of common day" (Jude, 21), as Jude begins his initiation into the ugly realities of scholarship and institutionalized religion.

Jude's simultaneous innocence and intuitive ability are evident in his encounter with Vilbert, the quack physician. Jude naively considers Vilbert "a trustworthy source of information on matters not strictly professional" (Jude, 24). When he trusts Vilbert's promise to bring him Latin and Greek grammars in return for drumming up business, Jude experiences an important disillusionment. He is able to see through the quack's halting excuses and, in a flash of insight, realizes "what shoddy humanity the quack was made of" (Jude, 25).

At the supreme moment, however, or rather, at each supreme moment, certain conditions hurl the boy back into insignificance. The moment he is about to develop into a man of religious education and distinction, Arabella casts herself in his way and he falls an easy victim. The fact is that Jude and Arabella are attracted to each other almost entirely by instinct; there is, as the narrator indicates, "a momentary flash of

intelligence, a dumb announcement of affinity in posse, between herself and him" (Jude, 34).

Hardy's often discussed description of the first meeting of Jude and Arabella, provoked by and held in front of a pig's pizzle, places sexuality in an indisputably prominent place in the novel. The narrator observes that this physical urge does not obey one's "higher" impulses and is often antithetical to one's plans: Jude is attracted to Arabella, "in commonplace obedience to conjunctive orders from headquarters, unconsciously received by unfortunate men when the last intention of their lives is to be occupied with the feminine" (Jude, 34). The essence of the power of sexuality is that it holds greater sway over human behaviour than do reason or high aims and pure motives of a less corporeal nature:

> In short, as if materially, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him - something which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences that had moved him hitherto. This seemed to care little for his reason and his will, nothing for his so called elevated intentions, and moved him along, as a violent schoolmaster a schoolboy he has seized by the collar, in a direction which tended towards the embrace of a woman for whom he had no respect, and whose life had nothing in common with his own except locality (Jude, 37-38).

The paragraphs following the one cited above enhance two impressions. The first is that Jude is relatively powerless to control his physical nature at this point. The second is that Jude's romantic dreams of cities with haloes of holiness and lofty ambitions are

juxtaposed against the smells and sounds of a pig farm where Jude finds and courts his first love. The contrast between the vision and the reality mocks Jude's sexual attraction to Arabella by placing it on an animal level that seems incompatible with the exalted aims Jude has set for himself.

Later, when Jude and Sue meet so that Jude can tell her about his "morning performance ... with Arabella" (Jude, 132), their conversation occurs in a squalid setting that mocks the romantic feelings they have for each other; and, as the narrator reminds us, such ironic and inappropriate settings are typical of the way Fate deals with humanity by opposing its wishes (Jude, 133). However, in one sense, this setting for the relating of Jude's marriage with Arabella is appropriate, since it, like the descriptions of the pig farm and constant association of Arabella with pigs, stresses the animal and physical sides of Arabella and, through his association with her, of Jude.

Although the sexual instinct is not in itself an evil force, it does hold sway over Jude's will and personality, and operates unconsciously in a direction opposite to his intentions. Its power is probably largely derived from Jude's innocence - in this case, his relative lack of experience with women. The narrator tells us that Jude feels the power of Arabella's "magnetism" (Jude, 35), that he "felt himself drifting strangely, but could not help it" (Jude, 35), that he is "faintly conscious that to common-sense there was something lacking, and still more obviously something redundant" in Arabella's

nature (Jude, 36). Even though Jude seems a helpless victim of this sexual instinct, he is not, however, the only character ruled by it. Arabella, too, is under its sway; her attraction to Jude is depicted as being just as immediate, powerful, and irresistible as his to her. She tells her companions: "'He's the sort of man I long for. I shall go mad if I can't give myself to him altogether! I felt I should when I first saw him!'" (Jude, 42).

Thus, as embodied in Arabella and in Jude, sex seems an overpowering force that links man with the lower creatures. It limits man's "higher" abilities and actively negates many of the nobler things he tries to accomplish: "the scorn of Nature for man's finer emotions, and her lack of interest in his aspirations" (Jude, 141).

Although both Jude and Arabella are attracted to each other by mere instinct, there is a basic difference in the kinds of consciousness they represent. Arabella is amoral and animalistic; her association with pigs and the description of her as "a complete and substantial female animal - no more no less" (Jude, 34), emphasize this aspect of her nature. The seduction scene shows Arabella at her animalistic best or worst. Having arranged for Jude and herself to be alone, she uses the device of hatching a hen's egg as a means of luring her lover into the trap she has already prepared. She tells Jude coyly, "'I suppose it is natural for a woman to want to bring live things into the world'" (Jude, 47). The hiding of the unhatched egg becomes an apt symbol of later events. Arabella's playful strategy as she flirts with Jude suggests her general strategy of tricking him into marriage by a

pretended pregnancy. The point, however, is not that Arabella is sinister or that Jude is saintly, only that Jude falls an easy victim because of his goodness and innocence on the one hand, and his relative lack of experience with women on the other.

Shortly after Jude proposes to Arabella he is described as being nearly conscious of her essential nature: "He knew well, too well, in the secret centre of his brain, that Arabella was not worth a great deal as a specimen of womankind" (Jude, 48). Nevertheless, because he feels a responsibility to her as an "honourable" young man, he must drive such thoughts from his mind. His reflectiveness is not allowed to function freely, however, and Jude sacrifices his intuitive knowledge of the wrongness of this marriage to the exigencies of social approval and conventionally honourable behaviour.

In the pig-killing scene (Chapter X), we see the contrast between Jude's sensitivity and Arabella's callousness. To Arabella, Jude's distaste for the job of inflicting violent death upon a dumb animal is a sign of weakness. But Jude, because he senses the invisible bond which unites all living things, sees the pig not merely as a food-source but as a "fellow-mortal" whose suffering is as real as that of any human being. The frustration of their marriage, deriving from the fact that Arabella finds herself the wife of a man who does not love her, and with whose interests she has nothing in common, is understandable enough. Although she cannot comprehend Jude's dream of achievement in Christminster, she instinctively knows it is her rival and enemy, and she seizes upon his books in order to be avenged. She scatters his

books with her grease-smeared hands, then runs into the street displaying her dishevelled hair and gown to passers-by as she shouts accusations at her husband. The grease which soils Jude's books is a concrete reminder of the sexual side of his nature, which in this situation has besmirched and defiled his Christminster dream.

At this point the fact should be stressed that while Hardy presents man's animal nature as delimiting in some respects, he also knows that it is an essential aspect of man's total composition that must be acknowledged and dealt with. Refusal to accept this aspect of human nature results in great and unnecessary suffering, as it does in Tess and Jude. Jude the Obscure shows that the sexual urge in and of itself is not debasing to human stature when it is combined with the more spiritual level of union that humanity is capable of achieving. In this context, sex is just an "instinct" (Jude, 52), to be seen as neither immoral nor moral but rather as an urge that is part of the human character. Problems arise because society has not decided to accept the animal side of man's nature, and the "'normal sex-impulses are turned into devilish domestic gins and springes to noose and hold back those who want to progress'" (Jude, 172-173).

However, despite the sensual side of Jude's nature, which brought about the union with Arabella, the dream of scholarly achievement has never been abandoned. The boyhood dream of a position or a place among the scholars and students of the land is still to be pursued. The persistent glow of the city is still there on the distant horizon with

its promise of a life elsewhere, and Jude wanders toward the "heavenly Jerusalem" surrounded by "a faint halo" which he observes with an almost religious awe, a quality suggested by the phrase "eye of faith" (Jude, 62).

Christminster is not only associated with scholars and religion in Jude's imagination but with Sue Bridehead as well. Long before Jude meets his cousin he sees a photograph of her in his aunt's house at Marygreen and is informed that the girl is living in Christminster. Sue's face in the photograph is surrounded by a large hat "with radiating folds under the brim like the rays of a halo" (Jude, 63). The implication of saintliness must surely be attributed to Jude's imagination rather than to the narrator's. His glimpse of the picture is described as a "quickening ingredient" in bringing about the long-imagined journey. It seems that Jude is beginning to regard his cousin as surrounded by the same aura of holiness that he attributes to Christminster itself.

In Christminster, Jude's feeling of isolation is increased by his self-imposed regimen of work and study, which narrows his life to include only his studies and his necessary labour as a stonemason. He is described in one authorial comment as an "enthusiast" in his studies, a fanatic whose "desire absorbed him" (Jude, 71). Obsessed by his dream and haunted by the ghosts of Christminster past, Jude neglects the practical task of making systematic inquiries about methods of entering a college. His isolation in Christminster feeds his dream, and his dream in turn increases his isolation.

From the window of his lodgings, Jude can see the spire of the Cathedral and the tower and pinnacles of a college, and uses these landmarks as "stimulants" to his imagination (Jude, 71), for they seem to promise success in the Christminster world. But they are little more than vague symbols to him. Although he is physically much closer to these buildings than when he viewed them in childhood, Jude is still far from them in his ignorance of what is behind their facades. His idealization of Christminster prevents him from investigating its reality.

In this extreme isolation the news that his cousin is in the vicinity comes like a breath of fresh air to Jude; at last he will be able to catch a glimpse of his "patron saint" in the flesh. When he finds her in an ecclesiastical warehouse he assumes that her work is therefore "saintly" and "Christian" (Jude, 72). When Sue speaks he notices "in the accents certain qualities of his own voice; softened and sweetened but his own" (Jude, 72). Jude has already begun to regard Sue as a mirror-image of himself.

Jude, however, chooses not to begin their acquaintance at this point. Although his ostensible motive is respect for the wishes of Aunt Drusilla, who has warned him against the girl, it is evident that Jude himself is quite willing to let Sue remain "more or less an ideal character" (Jude, 73). Just as his enthusiasm for Christminster has been built up without much regard for the city's reality, so Jude's idealized passion for his cousin will be fueled first by daydreams and uninvolved observation. In fact, he observes her from a distance

several times before meeting her - not only in the shop where she works, but by chance on a crowded street, and later in a service at the Cathedral-Church of Cardinal College, where he has gone for the specific purpose of viewing her. It is as though Jude is deliberately withholding himself from contact with Sue on a human level, for fear that such contact might dim the saintly aura with which her personality is surrounded.

Even at the Cathedral service, an occasion which seems especially favourable for beginning an acquaintance with his cousin, he is unable to bring himself to the point. On this occasion, too, he is powerfully attracted to her, imagining that she must be "steeped body and soul in church sentiment" and therefore has "much in common with him" (Jude, 75). However, the narrator distances himself and the reader from this naive assumption by interjecting a hint that the "atmosphere blew as distinctly from Cyprus as from Galilee" (Jude, 75). Jude's objects of desire - scholarly Christminster and the woman he associates with it - are held at a distance to be observed and contemplated before any attempt at contact is made.

When the cousins finally meet, it is not Jude but Sue herself who takes the initiative by coming to the stonemason's yard where he is employed. His recognition of her later from his fellow-workers' descriptions is the stimulus for an immediate decision to see her. Nevertheless, it will take a remarkably long time to reconcile himself to encountering the reality of Sue, as opposed to the "ideality" of her which he has cherished so assiduously.

Early in the novel Sue appears to be a counterpart or mirror image of Jude, and an understanding of Sue's character is essential to an understanding of his. The two are, after all, related; some family resemblance is likely. Moreover, the idea that the cousins are counterparts is repeated again and again, so often that it is hammered into the reader's consciousness. Late in the novel Phillotson - an unimaginative character and one who has no vested interest in noticing such a phenomenon - comments that the pair have "an extraordinary affinity" together (Jude, 184).

Sue, as will be clearly shown, is a reverse image of Jude. At the beginning of their acquaintance and throughout their love affair, Sue reflects not only what Jude already is but what he may become. Just after the scene during the Cathedral service, in which Jude had cherished the imagined character of Sue as a devout Anglican worshipper, Hardy presents a flashback which reveals her as almost the reverse of Jude's idealization.

It is significant that Sue chooses to spend her free time in the country-side surrounding Christminster. She prefers the pastoral world outside the city gates, a world which reminds her of the pre-Christian cultures of Greece and Rome. Sue's encounter with the foreign vendor of pagan statuettes is not, then, so strange as it might at first appear. Her purchase of the statuettes is an acting out on the symbolic level of a choice she has already made: that of the world of Venus and Apollo as opposed to the world of Cathedral services.

Nevertheless, Sue's behaviour in this scene suggests that her devotion to paganism is more superficial than real. After buying the statuettes she feels uncomfortable at the thought of being seen with them: "They seemed so very large now that they were in her possession, and so very naked" (Jude, 77). So she wraps them in foliage which she gathers along the way; even after this attempt at camouflage, however, "she was still in a trembling state, and seemed almost to wish she had not bought the figures" (Jude, 77). Clearly, Sue's choice of paganism is more the result of rebellion against her restrictive surroundings than of a sincere preference. She exclaims irreverently, "'Well, anything is better than those everlasting church fal-lals!'" (Jude, 77). And the statuettes acquire a new piquancy for Sue when she is obliged to smuggle them "into the most Christian city in the country" (Jude, 77), and hide them from her prudish employer, Miss Fontover.

The following act of rebellion that Sue enjoys is her ritualistic behaviour that evening in front of her pagan "altar":

> Placing the pair of figures on the chest of drawers, a candle on each side of them, she withdrew to the bed, flung herself down thereon, and began reading a book she had taken from her box, which Miss Fontover knew nothing of. It was a volume of Gibbon, and she read the chapter dealing with the reign of Julian the Apostate (Jude, 78).

The juxtaposition of the figures with "a Calvary print" which is "hanging between them" (Jude, 78), as well as the reading of Gibbon, suggests to her Swinburne's poem "Hymn to Proserpine". Hardy quotes only two lines of this long poem, but the entire text is of

interest in the context of Sue's "paganism".

Sue's use of the poem in this scene casts a doubtful light upon the sincerity of her paganism. She has taken the Swinburne poem as her holy writ, constructed an altar, and invented her own ritual to act out before it. Yet she has no appreciation of the underlying stoicism and pessimism of the poem's implications. Her paganism is more of a reaction than a religion.

At the same time that Sue is ritualistically denouncing the "pale Galilean" of the "Hymn", Jude is enacting a ritual of his own - an orthodox one. Hardy makes an explicit contrast between Sue's rebellious paganism and Jude's earnest application to his religious studies:

> At the very time that Sue was tossing and staring at her figures, the policeman and belated citizens passing along under his window might have heard, if they had stood still, strange syllables mumbled with fervour within - words that had for Jude an indescribable enchantment (Jude, 79).

Sue's first meeting with Jude is masterfully portrayed by Hardy. Her openness and enthusiasm are contrasted with his reserve, her "paganism" with his orthodoxy. Jude has chosen as their meeting place the spot of the Martyrdoms, a location to which Sue objects as "gloomy and inauspicious in its associations" (Jude, 82). Jude speaks to her "with the bashfulness of a lover;" she replies "with the freedom of a friend" (Jude, 82). In this scene it appears that the personalities of the two cousins are almost completely opposed.

As soon as Jude arrives in Christminster he begins his idealization of Sue as "saintly," and "Christian" (Jude, 72); a cousin, who would "be to him a kindly star, an elevating power, a companion in Anglican worship, a tender friend" (Jude, 74). Early in his acquaintance with her, Jude sees her almost as an "ideality" (Jude, 80), a "divinity" (Jude, 116), and the better he gets to know her, the more he uses, whether in speech or thought, such terms as "'a good angel!'" (Jude, 149), so "ethereal", "incarnate" (Jude, 150), and an "aerial being" (Jude, 172); further, she is "'spirit ... disembodied creature, ... hardly flesh at all'" (Jude, 195). Furthermore, throughout the scene in which she comes to Jude's lodgings after her swim across the river, she is described in language befitting a goddess; she is "clammy as a marine deity," and "her clothes clung to her like the robes upon the figures in the Parthenon frieze" (Jude, 115). Such descriptions of Sue continue throughout the whole novel; she is a "bodiless creature" (Jude, 205) she "hardly touched ground"; she is a "fairy" (Jude, 231) and "a refined creature, intended by Nature to be left intact" (Jude 271). Fairly late in the novel, Sue is still to Jude "the most ethereal", and "least sensual woman" (Jude, 272) and his "guardian-angel!" (Jude, 280). Even when Sue leaves Jude, as the novel approaches its close, she remains to Jude an "angel" (Jude, 294).

Despite Jude's infatuation with the "heavenly" city and his industrious studies in preparation for becoming a scholar, his Christminster dream soon begins to crumble when he receives an answer to the several letters he wrote to the heads of houses enquiring about the possibility of a scholarship. The blunt reply Jude receives from the

Master of "Biblioll College" that he had better remain in his "own sphere" as a stonemason (Jude, 95) awakens Jude to the reality of his situation. The narrator comments: "This terribly sensible advice exasperated Jude" (Jude, 96). After receiving this cold and heartless letter, Jude stands at the Fourways "like one in a trance" (Jude, 96), and observes the passers-by. He experiences a new sympathy for "the struggling people like himself" (Jude, 96) who have stood at the same place and have engaged in "real enactments of the intensest kind" (Jude, 96). His obsession with the scholarly life, he now realizes, has blinded him to the humanity around him: "He began to see that the town life was a book of humanity infinitely more palpitating, varied and compendious than the gown life" (Jude, 96).

Although Jude is beginning to appreciate the real Christminster life, he soon discovers that he is not really a part of it. In the tavern to which he retreats after giving up his scholarly ambitions, Jude is surrounded by various representatives of the town life, including an ironmonger, masons, clerks, gamblers, and prostitutes. Here also are two Christminster undergraduates who are interlopers in the "town life." When, after getting drunk, Jude is goaded by both townspeople and undergraduates into reciting the Creed in Latin, he finds himself the object of their mockery. Even the young undergraduates are contemptuous of Jude and ignorant of the Creed he recites; one of them sneeringly objects that he is using the Nicene Creed rather than the Apostles' Creed (Jude, 99). This entire scene, in which Jude displays his laboriously acquired scholarship before an audience to whom it is worthless gibberish, is a symbolic representation

of his isolation from ordinary humanity. Just as he is barred from entering the colleges of Christminster - "the gown life" - he is also isolated from those who are ostensibly his own kind - "the struggling men and women" of the "town life." He is driven by his pride into setting himself apart from these people by his recital of the Creed, and then into turning upon them as a "pack of fools" (Jude, 99) who are ignorant of its meaning.

Even when Jude runs to see his cousin "under the influence of a childlike yearning for the one being in the world to whom it seemed possible to fly" (Jude, 100) he can find no permanent refuge. Leaving Sue's house at dawn, he strikes out into the Wessex countryside and returns to his aunt's house at Alfredston where he meets the curate and decides to aim his ambition at the ministry rather than at scholarship.

At this point Jude thinks of himself as an ascetic, spiritual, almost Christlike figure, selflessly devoting himself to religious studies. He plans to begin his ministry at the age of thirty because that was when Christ began to teach; he rejects his earlier ambition as a "social unrest" (Jude, 103) and aspires to rise no higher than a "humble curate wearing out his life in an obscure village or city slum" (Jude, 103). He thinks that this might be "true religion and a purgatorial course worthy of being followed by a remorseful man" (Jude, 103). Nevertheless Jude's thoughts and emotions are increasingly focused not on this "purgatorial course" but on Sue. He settles in Melchester in order to complete his theological reading

for the ministry - or so he tells himself - but he is strongly influenced in his choice of city by the fact that his cousin is in the Training School there.

Jude, however, remains for a long time true to his religious convictions; his aspiration to the ministry causes him to place severe restraints upon his expressions of affection. After Sue's dismissal from the Training School, he accepts at face value her disavowal of any feelings for him stronger than friendship. He refrains from kissing her at an inviting moment:

> Some men would have cast scruples to the winds, and ventured it, oblivious both of Sue's declaration of her neutral feelings, and of the pair of autographs in the vestry chest of Arabella's parish church. Jude did not. (Jude, 126-127).

He even reveals the truth about their relationship to Phillotson, thus paving the way for a reconciliation between Sue and his rival after the scandal which jeopardized Sue's reputation. Finally, when Jude's honesty compels him to reveal to Sue the fact of his marriage to another woman, she reacts by hastening her intended marriage to Phillotson. Thus, Jude's attempts to act in accordance with his religious principles only widen the gulf between him and Sue, and lead to suffering for both of them. Furthermore, he does not only agree to give her away in marriage to Phillotson, but allows her to lead him into the church for a rehearsal. During the marriage service he observes her behaviour and speculates : "Possibly she would go on inflicting such pains again and again, and grieving for

the sufferer again and again, in all her colossal inconsistency" (Jude, 140).

After Sue's marriage, Jude experiences a feeling of abandonment such as he has never had before. Then he unexpectedly meets Arabella as a barmaid at a Christminster pub. This episode is a shock to his religious and legal assumptions about marriage, for despite the legal tie between them, he cannot "realize their nominal closeness" (Jude, 144). Yet Jude also longs for physical satisfaction with Arabella. His religious beliefs provide a temporary rationalization for taking her back as his wife: "Arabella was perhaps an intended intervention to punish him for his unauthorized love" (Jude, 146) for Sue.

Jude, however, lets himself be passively guided by Arabella. Although he knows that she has "no more sympathy than a tigress with his relations or him" (Jude, 147) he acquiesces in her half-hearted offer to travel to Marygreen with him to see his dying aunt. When this plan is abandoned, and Arabella suggests that they travel to Aldbrickham to spend the night, Jude makes no objection, allowing himself to be seduced into a resumption of conjugal relations. It is not until the next morning that she tells him of the second husband she has taken in Australia.

After leaving her, Jude is plagued by "a sense of degradation at his revived experiences with her" (Jude, 149) which puts the animalistic side of his nature into conflict with his spiritualized adoration of Sue. When he encounters Sue on the same morning after Arabella parted

company with him, he regards Sue as "living largely in vivid imaginings, so ethereal a creature that her spirit could be seen trembling through her limbs," and feels "heartily ashamed of his earthliness in spending the hours he had spent in Arabella's company" (Jude, 150). Moreover, he feels guilty merely over a temporary indulgence of lust with a woman who is still his legal wife, even though the sexual instinct itself he has earlier considered as having "nothing in it of the nature of vice" and at its worst as being only "weakness" (Jude, 52).

Anxious to live the exemplary life of a clergyman, he makes various attempts at asceticism in order to rid himself of lust. But the physical side of his nature refuses to yield; he concludes that he has "too many passions to make a good clergyman," and envisions "a life of constant internal warfare between flesh and spirit" in which he can only hope that the flesh "might not always be victorious" (Jude, 155).

Jude's illusions about his cousin's saintliness, however, at this point begin to crumble. His religious faith itself will soon be in the process of disintegrating; his illicit passion for Sue, and disillusionment with human nature in general, especially in the incident involving the composer of a "strangely emotional" hymn, will serve to undermine his orthodox assumptions. As he believes the composer of the hymn to be a "man of sympathies" who would understand his own spiritual struggles, Jude makes a pilgrimage to Kennetbridge to consult him. But Jude's romantic assumptions contrast sharply with the reality which awaits him. Instead of the "man of soul" who "must have suffered, and throbbed, and yearned," the musician turns out to be a pragmatic

money-grubber interested only in his own success (Jude, 156). To Jude's ingenuous appreciation of the hymn's beauty he replies: "Yes, there's money in it, if I could only see about getting it published" (Jude, 156). Having confided that he will soon be leaving music for the wine business, the composer becomes remarkably cooler when he discovers the well-dressed and polite young man is not wealthy. The entire episode reveals to Jude not only his own naivete in expecting to find sympathy, idealism, or other qualities of the spirit in such a quarter, but becomes one in a series which shakes Jude's religious faith deeply.

When he arrives home that same day and finds an invitation from Sue to visit her at Shaston, he is more exasperated than ever at the uselessness of his Kennetbridge journey. At first he assumes that the "chimerical expedition" must have been "another special intervention of Providence" (Jude, 157). But immediately he rejects this religious interpretation of events: "But a growing impatience of faith, which he had noticed in himself more than once of late, made him pass over in ridicule the idea that God sent people on fools' errands" (Jude, 157).

However, the single most important cause of Jude's loss of faith is his love for Sue. The beginning of the end occurs immediately after Aunt Drusilla's funeral at Marygreen when the cousins are together. When Sue finally states directly that "'it is a torture'" for her to live with Phillotson (Jude, 169), all Jude's doubts about the rightness of his religious views are brought to the fore. Imagining Sue sitting alone in Mrs.Edlin's cottage, he "again questioned his devotional motto

that all was for the best" (Jude, 170). Early the next morning when he hears the tormented cry of a rabbit caught in a gin, he decides to end its suffering immediately by killing it. The powerful symbolism of this scene can hardly be missed. The rabbit's suffering suggests a universal condition throughout nature, including Sue's entrapment in the "gin" of the marriage contract. And as his natural response to the animal's shriek of agony is to end its misery at once, likewise, his natural response to Sue's torment would be to release her somehow from her conjugal obligation to Phillotson. But to do that, or to encourage her rebellion, would be to go against all the doctrines of Christian belief. And so, almost inevitably, Jude begins to cast his beliefs aside. He tells Sue, "' ... my doctrines and I begin to part company'" (Jude, 171), and "'I'll never care about my doctrines or my religion any more! Let them go! Let me help you, even if I do love you, and even if you ...'" (Jude, 171).

Jude, who is certainly a compassionate and worthy person, deems himself unworthy to become a minister because of his feelings for Sue. The "turning-point" takes place in the station the morning Sue wants to catch the train to Shaston to join her husband when the cousins "run back quickly," kiss each other "close and long." That kiss, as the narrator comments, "was a turning-point in Jude's career":

> Back again in the cottage, and left to reflection, he saw one thing : that though his kiss of that aerial being had seemed the purest moment of his faultful life, as long as he nourished this unlicensed tenderness it was glaringly inconsistent for him to pursue the idea of becoming the soldier and servant of a religion in which

> sexual love was regarded as at its best a frailty, and at its worst damnation. What Sue had said in warmth was really the cold truth. When to defend his affection tooth and nail, to persist with headlong force in impassioned attention to her, was all he thought of, he was condemned ipso facto as a professor of the accepted school of morals. He was as unfit, obviously, by nature, as he had been by social position, to fill the part of a propounder of accredited dogma (Jude, 172).

The emphasis in this paragraph is on established beliefs: Jude's feelings are "unlicensed", he cannot be a "professor of the accepted school of morals", he cannot be a "propounder of accredited dogma." "Accepted", "accredited" - these terms suggest the existence of a static and unresponsive system of values in terms of which Jude finds himself an outsider.

Thus, to avoid being a hypocrite, and to become in his passion for Sue an "ordinary sinner", Jude burns his theological texts because "he knew that, in this country of true believers, most of them were not saleable at a much higher price than waste-paper value ..." (Jude, 173). (Here, as so often, Hardy as narrator does not make much effort to disguise his own feelings). Hardy, however, does not suggest that in his new role as an "ordinary sinner" Jude is able to free himself entirely from hypocrisy and self-deception in sexual matters. Jude's "point of bliss" is now a human being rather than a heavenly abstraction. For example, he continues to deceive himself about his sexual feelings for Sue and persists in thinking that the two can have a purely Platonic relationship. In a rather uncharitable action for a man of an extremely compassionate nature, Jude finally blackmails Sue into

having a sexual relationship with him by threatening to see Arabella if she does not. Given Jude's great sensitivity to others and his overwhelmingly generous and self-sacrificing nature, this action seems grossly out of character and perhaps is meant by Hardy to demonstrate that man is an unconscious prisoner of his physical urges.

The return of Jude and Sue to Christminster is more than an ordinary homecoming. It becomes a kind of religious pilgrimage for Jude, as he anticipates returning on Remembrance Day in order "'to live there - perhaps to die there!'" (Jude, 254). Unfortunately, his anticipated pleasure turns to pain as he once again feels himself utterly rejected by the city he loves.

In some ways Jude's return to Christminster suggests Christ's return to Jerusalem before his crucifixion. As Jude stands with Sue and their children in the rain, watching learned doctors file into one of the colleges, certain details of the scene suggest biblical parallels. The doctors wear "blood-red robes"; thunder rumbles ominously through the "overcast and livid" sky; and the child called Father Time whispers, "'It do seem like the Judgement Day!'" (Jude, 256). As a boy in Marygreen Jude had called this shining city "the heavenly Jerusalem", and Sue also compares it, though ironically, to the biblical city. Jude has loved Christminster and had been ignominously rejected by it, much as Jesus loved and was rejected by Jerusalem. Finally, after much wandering, Jude deliberately returns to Christminster, "'perhaps to die there!'"

He returns as a sort of secular Christ, stripped of his religious beliefs, bereft of his dreams, and without even a set of moral principles to guide him. As Jude tells the crowd which gathers out of curiosity to hear him on Remembrance Day:

> 'And what I appear, a sick and poor man, is not the worst of me. I am in a chaos of principles - groping in the dark - acting by instinct and not after example. Eight or nine years ago when I came here first, I had a neat stock of fixed opinions, but they dropped away one by one; and the further I get the less sure I am. I doubt if I have anything more for my present rule of life than following inclinations which do me and nobody else any harm, and actually give pleasure to those I love best' (Jude, 258).

Although he has lost his "'neat stock of fixed opinions'" Jude has gained a measure of self-knowledge during his years of wandering and humiliation. His return is to be in an ironic fulfilment of his years in the wilderness. For in Christminster Jude will suffer what for him amounts to a crucifixion: the loss of his children through murder-suicide, the loss of Sue through her conversion to religious orthodoxy, and the final collapse of his Christminster dream. In this way the biblical echoes and parallels extend and enrich the meaning of Jude's suffering.

The tragic loss of their children weakens Sue's mind; she gives up her earlier non-religious world-view and replaces it with a religious conception of a vengeful Old Testament God:

> 'We must conform!' She said mournfully. 'All the ancient wrath of the Power above us has been vented upon us, His poor creatures, and we must submit. There is no choice. It is no use fighting against God!'
>
> 'It is only against man and senseless circumstance,' said Jude (Jude, 271).

Nevertheless, Sue takes upon herself the attitude of a contrite Christian. Believing herself to be Phillotson's wife despite the divorce, she confesses to "'a dreadful sense of my own insolence of action'" (Jude, 271). Her impulse toward self-immolation, formerly submerged beneath her paganistic exterior, now comes to the surface with a vengeance: "'Self-renunciation - that's everything! I cannot humiliate myself too much. I should like to prick myself all over with pins and bleed out the badness that's in me!'" (Jude, 273).

In the great scene in which Jude finds Sue prostrate before the cross in the Church of St. Silas (Jude, 276), we can distinctly discern the contrast between the results of Sue's sufferings and the results of Jude's. Sue has fled to the Church and its cross as a refuge and a source of meaning. In the teachings of Christianity she finds an explanation, if not a justification, of their suffering: that it is her own sinful nature which is to blame. "'Arabella's child killing mine was a judgment - the right slaying the wrong'" (Jude, 277). Painful though this self-flagellation may be, it is less painful than believing the deaths of her children to be meaningless. Jude is moved by Sue's intransigence in this scene to denounce vehemently the religion he once embraced: "'You make me hate

Christianity, or mysticism, or Sacerdotalism, or whatever it may be called, if it's that which has caused this deterioration in you'" (Jude, 277).

So the change in Sue dramatizes more sharply the thoroughness with which Jude now rejects Christianity. His amazement at her transformation indicates that he has never thoroughly understood her; he does not realize that Sue's conversion is not just a temporary effect of grief but the result of a basic element of her personality. Her decision to return to Phillotson is, therefore, a crushing last blow for Jude: "'Error - perversity! It drives me out of my senses ... It will be a fanatic prostitution ...'" (Jude, 286). The jeweled cross in the Church of St.Silas before which Jude finds Sue prostrate in the darkness is an apt symbol of Sue's Christianity as Jude perceives it - a once beautiful but now irrelevant relic, enveloped in mental obscurity (Jude, 276).

"The self-sacrifice of the woman on the altar of what she was pleased to call her principles" takes place when Sue remarries Phillotson (Jude, 292). On the night before her remarriage she destroys an embroidered nightgown which she labels "adulterous" because it reminds her of life with her lover (Jude, 289). Jude's submission to Arabella's wiles comes as a direct result of Sue's "sacrifice". After the loss of Sue it seems that Jude also loses - almost as a conscious decision - his will to live. When Arabella remarries him in his drunken grief, he is not so drunk as to be totally unaware of what he is doing and saying. He identifies the burning-place of the Protestant martyr

Ridley, quotes from a sermon preached at the time of the martyrdom, and tells the uncomprehending Arabella, "'I am giving my body to be burned!'" (Jude, 298). He also states, "'I don't care about myself! Do what you like with me!'" (Jude, 298). It seems clear that Jude's second victimization by Arabella is more the result of his uncaringness than of her cleverness. Jude's remarriage is, in its own way, as much of a "self-sacrifice" as Sue's.

Jude's ultimate method of escaping the physical is in death. Like Tess, Jude finds his final release in death, which allows him to transcend the physical and temporal dimensions that he comes more and more to associate with frustration and suffering. Somewhat like Hardy as a boy, young Jude wishes to be able to stop time and remain in the relative ignorance and obscurity of boyhood: "Growing up brought responsibilities, he found. Events did not rhyme quite as he had thought. ... If he could only prevent himself growing up! He did not want to be a man" (Jude, 17). The death wish that obsesses Father Time, for whom even boyhood is not a refuge, can also be seen in Jude as he wishes "himself out of the world" (Jude, 27). His suicide attempts (by drowning and by drinking) also reflect his desire for a stasis in which he can be safe from the changes that bring more disappointment into his life. He thinks back to his feelings of compassion and regret about the killing of the pig and sees that death was more merciful than life, for the pig and for himself: "'I feel now that the greatest mercy that could be vouchsafed to me would be that something should serve me as I served that animal'" (Jude, 305). His final act of self-immolation, however,

occurs after the marriage. Already ill with consumption, he decides to make the exhausting journey to Marygreen to see Sue - a trip which he knows will bring about his death.

Jude's journey to Marygreen has about it an air of tragic doom seldom equalled in English or American fiction. Echoes of Jude's boyhood innocence widen the tragic dimensions of these scenes in and around Marygreen. When he first arrives at the schoolhouse he hears "the usual sing-song tones of the little voices that had not learnt Creation's groan" (Jude, 308). And when he departs from Marygreen his path leads across fields where he once scared the rooks for Farmer Troutham. He then climbs the hill to the Brown House, from which he first caught sight of the illusory brightness of Christminster. At last, he reaches the milestone on which he carved once the message of his Christminster ambitions: "Thither, J.F." (Jude, 62). Fittingly, it is "nearly obliterated by moss" (Jude, 310). Exhausted, Jude lies down at this place, the coldest in all Wessex "when a north or east wind is blowing" (Jude, 310). By choosing this resting place he is ending his life where, in a symbolic sense, it began.

Thus the journey to Marygreen is a conscious act of self-destruction. After the journey Jude returns to Arabella, explains to her that he has completed what he set out to do:

> 'I made up my mind that a man confined to his room by inflammation of the lungs, a fellow who had only two wishes left in the world, to see a particular woman, and then to die, could neatly accomplish those two wishes at one stroke by taking this

> journey in the rain. That I've done. I have seen her for the last time, and I've finished myself - put an end to a feverish life which ought never to have been begun!' (Jude, 311).

Jude's decision to make the trip gives him "if not strength, stability and calm" (Jude, 307). After a brief recovery, Jude dies in the summer of the following year.

The day on which Jude dies is "warm, cloudless, enticing" (Jude, 319) and Arabella leaves him for the excitement of the Remembrance Day games. The notes of a concert drifting through the windows of his room are like "a stanza or melody composed in a dream ... wonderfully excellent to the half-aroused intelligence, but hopelessly absurd at the full waking" (Jude, 270). The musical analogy which extends throughout the novel is surely being suggested here. As Jude awakens he calls for some water, believing that either Arabella or Sue will answer. At his "full waking", however, Jude realizes the absurdity of his situation: "'Ah - yes! The Remembrance games. ... And I here. And Sue defiled!'" (Jude, 320). The shouts of "Hurrah!" from the Remembrance games, which punctuate his dying words like a litany, are the ultimate testimony to Christminster's cruel indifference. He faces death with dignity and courage. Although he curses his life and the day of his birth, his curses are ritualistic and within the context of a religious tradition; they are not merely a shriek of agony or despair. Set within their biblical context - the suffering of Job - they lose some of their nihilistic quality and acquire a broader and richer meaning.

The extent and intensity of Jude's suffering make his desire for some peace understandable. Thus, his 'suicide' can be seen as the final desperate action of a person who has had to endure an incredible amount of suffering, and whose eventual despair overtook him only after he had put up a remarkably good fight, enduring much more than most people could have withstood. The references to Job, martyrdom, and Christ re-enforce the idea of the enormity of Jude's anguish. So like Job, Jude views death as a release from physical and mental suffering, and a liberation from the injustices of life. So Jude welcomes death not as inevitable, but as a relief from the mental torture he is suffering - from knowing that Sue has "defiled" herself, that he himself is a helpless victim of Arabella's callous indifference, and that Christminster, both scholarly and ecclesiastical, has forever rejected him.

The last scene of the novel emphasizes death as a release as Jude's face appears to the narrator to wear "a smile of some sort," and Sue is seen to be equally miserable, able to find the peace Jude has only when she dies: "'She's never found peace since she left his arms, and never will again till she's as he is now!'" (Jude, 324). Although Jude may curse the day of his birth in biblical cadences, he never completely abandons his dreams, his belief in the sanctity of human love, or the wholeness of his selfhood. Seen as such, Jude's character remains more of a testimonial to human suffering and possibility than anything else in the novel.

The "Genius"

In Jude The Obscure, when Jude courts his first love, he and Arabella go to an inn, and there they notice a picture of Samson and Delilah (Jude, 39). Obviously the reference is relevant to Jude's situation. Just as Delilah loved Samson and betrayed him to his enemies after making him drunk, Arabella betrays Jude at the beginning by a pretended pregnancy and marries him. Then nearly at the end of the book, she remarries him in his drunken grief over the loss of Sue, and when he is near death she leaves him alone on his deathbed. Jude's second marriage to Arabella asserts in a way his strong lustful nature which, as we have already observed, brought about the original union with her.

Similarly, in furnishing his fashionable New York City apartment, the hero of Dreiser's autobiographical novel The "Genius" (1915) includes in one of the rooms in which he entertains bright throngs of visitors a huge crucifix - something he had wanted for many years - and in another part of the room on a pedestal a marble bust of Nero "with his lascivious, degenerate face, scowling grimly at the world ..." (The "Genius", 474). Although presented probably haphazardly and passed over quickly in artless fashion, the juxtaposition of Christian saviour and pagan emperor suggests perhaps the most important conflict in the novel, the conflict between spiritual and materialistic values, and more specifically the conflict between two kinds of artists, the true Creator who is inspired by love and the "mis-creator", to use the term from the novel (The "Genius", 709), who is inspired by lust.

Christ and Nero aptly illustrate the contrast between the true and the false creator. Christ is the Son of the God, the Creator. Nero, by contrast, is the Roman emperor who allegedly started Rome burning to use the fire as a backdrop for his lyre playing and recitation on the fall of Troy. He burned Rome for art's sake. Like Nero, Eugene, the artist hero of The "Genius", possesses a pagan temperament, and is eager to prove that he is an artistic genius, even if it means being ruthless. However, like Jude Fawley, he also possesses a spiritual side and senses that lust is destructive, not creative. In his spiritual search for religious truth, he finally turns to Christian Science and discovers that Mary Baker Eddy expresses his own doubts about desire. A passage which he reads in Science and Health explains how the false artist is misled by lust:

> Carnal beliefs defraud us. They make man an involuntary hypocrite - producing evil when he would create good, forming deformity when he would outline grace and beauty, injuring those whom he would bless. He becomes a general mis-creator, who believes he is a semi-God (The "Genius", 709).

As in Jude the Obscure where Hardy considers the physical urge as having "nothing in it of the nature of vice, and could be only at the most called weakness" (Jude, 52), in a similar way, Dreiser throughout The "Genius" points out the likeness of desire to alcohol or a drug to which Eugene is enslaved, but against which, like Jude, he struggles constantly. Jude, in the final part of the novel, recognizes the defects of his character: "'My two Arch Enemies you know - my weakess for womankind and my impulse to strong liquor'"

(Jude, 280). Eugene, too, in the final part of The "Genius", depicts in one of his paintings "a decaying drunkard" because he reminds him of himself, intoxicated with desire, but determined to stay on his feet (The "Genius", 729). The "Genius" might seem immoral because of the hero's promiscuity, but we should not fail to observe that behind the philandering hero's desperate promiscuity there is a longing for a relationship with a woman based on something higher than lust.

The life portrayed in The "Genius" is obviously Dreiser's own. Helen Richardson Dreiser substantiates this claim saying that Eugene Witla is a composite of Everett Shinn, a painter of the Ash Can School, and Dreiser himself.[7] As a revelation of Dreiser's philosophical theory, this novel is indispensable. It reveals the essential conflict in Witla which is, without a doubt, the central conflict in Dreiser: how does a man possessing transcendental qualities maintain his own integrity and individuality in a materialistic society that is antagonistic to the best intentions of the individual? Dreiser's answer is The "Genius".

Drieser's structure of the novel reveals Eugene's inner conflict. Book I, entitled "Youth", initially probes the depth of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, the material and the spiritual in the person of Eugene Witla. Eugene, in this first part, is depicted as a sensitive artist who is in love with the flux of life, beauty - and eighteen-year-old girls. Book II, the "Struggle", portrays the charms of materialism, the possibility of unlimited monetary and social success coupled with the physical attraction and charm embodied in the beauty of

young girls. Interwined throughout this section is the conflict of the artist with the world without; the artist recoils at the thought of being enslaved to this kind of society. Finally, Book III, the "Revolt", resolves the conflict in the artist-businessman, and concludes with Witla returning to the life of art, a wiser man.

Dreiser makes his hero an artist, and endows him with distinguished artistic gifts to the extent that, when the boy is first introduced, we get the impression that he is going to develop into a painter or a sculptor because he is described at the age of eleven as having "no great talent for interpretation at this time, only an intense sense of beauty. The beauty of a bird in flight, a rose in bloom, a tree swaying in the wind - these held him" (The "Genius", 12). In addition to this love of beauty in nature, we learn that Eugene also is a great admirer of young girls. In Dreiser's terms, he is "mad about them" (The "Genius", 12). What makes Eugene mad about the fair sex is his nature, which is a combination of "emotion, fire, longings," although all these are "concealed behind a wall of reserve" (The "Genius", 11).

At seventeen, before Eugene leaves Alexandria, Illinois, a small town of "somewhere near ten thousand" (The "Genius", 9), his attention focuses on the seventeen-year-old, Stella Appleton. Name symbolism is immediately evident. Stella, the Latin word for star, and the suggestion of a fruit of nature in her last name, immediately stress Eugene's quest for the life beyond the merely material, the life of the stars, the spirit and nature.

At the beginning of their relationship, Stella likes Eugene; but later as she tires of his moody jealousy she goes her way, unharmed, probably to other innocent flirtations. Of their shy and awkward first love Dreiser tells us: "He hated her at times for not yielding to him wholly; but he was none the less wild over her beauty. ... Thereafter he knew in a really definite way what womanhood ought to be, to be really beautiful" (The "Genius", 31).

After this first passing experience with Stella, Eugene realizes that his artistic gifts are pushing him outside the boundaries of Alexandria. Chicago, as has been mentioned earlier, "a city that put vitality into almost every wavering heart," and "made the beginner dream dreams", captures his imagination as a young boy (The "Genius", 39). As Eugene proceeds to the city of "hope", he settles into the town life and starts his apprentice phase which involves reading the works of great philosophers and painters. The names mentioned are four - "Carlyle, Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman" (The "Genius", 44) - all of them celebrators of the spirit of transcendentalism. In addition to his reading, Eugene begins painting everything he sees around him, ranging from the "Chicago river, its black, mucky water churned by puffing tugs" (The "Genius", 49), to "great, full-blown women whose voluptuous contour of neck and arms and torso and hip and thigh was enough to set the blood of youth at fever heat" (The "Genius", 51).

In Chicago, Eugene meets Margaret Duff, a coarse and promiscuous girl who works in a laundry and with whom Eugene is initiated into physical sex. It is with her that Eugene first realizes the degree to

which he is a slave to sexual passion. Love-making with her, as the author indicates, "awakened a new, and if not evil, at least disrupting and disorganizing propensity of his character" (The "Genius", 44). His relationship with her, like the relationship of Jude with Arabella, is physically satisfying but spiritually frustrating. Reading about painters, musicians and philosophers, Eugene thinks in a vague way that he might be called upon to make some contribution in the world of art or philosophy, but he cannot share his dreams with Margaret Duff. Like Arabella, Margaret lives only from day to day and resents Eugene's claims to superiority. Only sexual passion keeps them together, and when that cools they drift apart. Margaret Duff, in fact, lacks what Eugene wants most in a woman - an artistic sensibility. Art becomes for Eugene, like Jude's dream of achievement in Christminster, a form of religion, and any woman who has no connection with it cannot help him grow spiritually. Although she is not very artistic, the next girl in Eugene's life has a sensibility of a higher order than the girl in the laundry. Ruby Kenny, that is, a fellow student at the Chicago Art Institute, comes from a working class background; nevertheless, she can talk about art because she is an artist's model; she can also play the piano, and dance well. She is a distinct improvement, as Eugene sees it, over Margaret Duff, but it is only a matter of time before Eugene begins looking for someone of a more refined nature with similar artistic predilictions.

When Eugene meets Angela Blue, a schoolteacher from rural Wisconsin, he thinks he has discovered his "ideal" (The "Genius",

82). She is refined and intelligent; she likes good music and plays the piano better than anyone he has ever known. These few accomplishments lead Eugene to assume that Angela is a spiritual person whom he can love for her soul alone. "He even tried to deceive himself into the belief that this was a spiritual relationship", but immediately we are told, "underneath {it} all was a burning sense of her beauty, her physical charm, her passion" (The "Genius", 90). Angela's physical attractiveness proves to be a trap, or to use the sexually suggestive image from the novel, her charms are like "silver strands spun out across an abyss, whose beauty but not whose dangers were known to him" (The "Genius",245-46). However, Eugene becomes engaged to Angela before he understands the carnal nature of his attraction for her, and before he comes to know that Angela is his complete opposite. While she waits in Wisconsin, Eugene goes east to New York City to make his way as an artist, and they plan to get married when he is successful enough to support her.

In Greenwich village Eugene finds women who appeal to him artistically as well as spiritually far more than Angela Blue does. In Miriam Finch, a sculptress ten years his senior, he believes he has met a woman who is "infinitely superior intellectually and artistically" to all the women he has ever known. (The "Genius", 138). The books of philosophy and poetry on her shelves impress him greatly, and her musical ability is outstanding. Her playing "represented a better intelligence, a keener selective judgment, a finer artistic impulse than anyone he had ever known had possessed" (The "Genius", 141). Eugene loves Miriam because she always makes herself agreeable to him, leads

him into a pleasant social life, and is something of a guide to him in matters of art, because as a successful sculptress she is familiar with the studio world. Eugene comes to what Dreiser describes as "the sanest, cleanest understanding with Miss Finch that he had yet reached with any woman" (The "Genius", 143). But the relationship is always platonic:

> He knew that only a sincere proposal of marriage could have won her, and he did not care enough for her for that. He felt himself bound to Angela and, curiously, he felt Miriam's age as a bar between them. He admired her tremendously and was learning in part through her what his ideal ought to be, but he was not drawn sufficiently to want to make love to her (The "Genius", 144-45).

Eugene and Miriam enjoy the finer things in life together. "'You like the really good things'", she assures him. "'So do I'" (The "Genius", 141). However, as much as Miriam appeals to Eugene spiritually and intellectually, she does not appeal to him physically, because she is not young or as beautiful as he would like. As is the case with Jude, the lure of the flesh is too strong for Eugene to be satisfied with a purely intellectual relationship.

In Christina Channing, the next important woman in his life, Eugene discovers a woman who encourages his potential as an artist, and thinks he has, at last, met someone who combines spiritual and physical beauty. As a promising opera singer, a "sensuous and lovable type," Christina recognizes the need for love both as a human requirement and as an artist's source of inspiration. Physically,

Christina embodies youthful perfection:

> She had a tall perfectly rounded form, a lovely oval face, a nut brown complexion with the rosy glow of health showing in cheeks and lips, and a mass of blue black hair. Her great brown eyes were lustrous and sympathetic (The "Genius", 146).

Eugene not only responds to her bodily beauty, but to the complementary quality of her artistic temperament: "'You are so lovely to me, ... that words are of no value. I can paint you. Or you can sing me what you are, but mere words won't show it'" (The "Genius", 151). Eugene considers breaking his engagement to Angela and contemplates marrying Christina who "shares with Eugene a dedication to art,"[8] but Christina does not want to get married. Her first and final love is her art.

In the meantime, Angela waits impatiently in Wisconsin for word from Eugene. Under constant pressure from Angela, who has been coached in the art of seduction by her younger sister, Marietta, Eugene succumbs to his fiancée's physical attractions, and finds himself obliged to set the date for the wedding. It is significant at this point that Book II, the "Struggle", begins with the marriage ceremony. The title of this second book suggests the difficulty that will be involved in this marriage between Angela and Eugene. In fact, prior to the wedding, Eugene has never really been convinced of the necessity to marry in the first place, and his marriage comes only as the fulfilment of "an uncomfortable social obligation" (The "Genius", 198). The reader, therefore, is made well aware of possible future problems. The narrator

keeps reminding us that "there was the consciousness, always with him, of his possibly making a mistake; the feeling that he was being compelled by circumstances and his own weakness to fulfil an agreement which might better remain unfulfilled" (The "Genius", 197). As Jude's physical urge brings about the union with Arabella, so it is only Eugene's desire which brings him closer to Angela and precipitates their marriage together (The "Genius", 197). Arabella, in Hardy's terms, is "a complete and substantial female animal - no more, no less", whereas Angela who stands in contrast with Arabella, is "sweet, devoted, painstaking in her attitude toward life, toward him, toward everything with which she came in contact." None the less, Angela seems not to be what Eugene "had always fancied his true mate would be - " (The "Genius", 197), and as Dreiser reflects through the thought of Eugene, "there was something wrong in this union" (The "Genius", 198).

Soon after their marriage, Eugene finds out, as he had earlier suspected, that, contrary to appearances, it is Angela with her "hot impulses", not he, who is the true sensualist. She, we are told, "was in a sense elemental, but Eugene was not: he was the artist ..." (The "Genius", 245). During the first few months of their marriage, they go strenuously for sex and into "a prolonged riot of indulgence ... bearing no relation to any necessity in their natures" (The "Genius", 245). And in Eugene's belief, it is Angela who does most of the "rioting" because she makes what Eugene considers inordinate demands upon him sexually, while meeting none of his deeper artistic and spiritual needs. When he begins to show signs and symptoms of

mental as well as physical breakdown, he blames his condition on Angela's sexual appetite and fails at the same time to take full account of "the effect of one's sexual life upon one's work, nor what such a life when badly arranged can do to a perfect art - how it can distort the sense of color, weaken that balanced judgment of character which is so essential to a normal interpretation of life ..." (The "Genius", 246). He comes to feel there is something about sex which is inimical to his spiritual or, at least, his psychological well-being. As he tries to diagnose his problem, "it came to him as a staggering truth that the trouble with him was over-indulgence physically; that the remedy was abstinence, complete or at least partial" (The "Genius", 250). In the meanwhile, Angela tries to refrain from exciting him sexually, but he has already fallen into a pit of despair and can no longer paint. His growth as an artist is completely arrested as a result of his relationship with Angela, or so he wants to believe, and what he had at first thought would be a marriage of true minds turns into a nightmare of physically and spiritually exhausting sexual excess.

As Arabella finds herself the wife of a man who does not love her and with whose interests she has nothing in common, similarly, Eugene finds himself the husband of a wife whom "he had never reached an understanding with ... by an intellectual process at all" (The "Genius", 260). As far as Jude's disastrous marriage to Arabella is concerned, we are reminded again and again that it is motivated more by the lure of lust and physical instinct than anything else. Likewise, in The "Genius", Dreiser makes clear that Eugene's marriage to Angela

"was not based on reason and spirituality of contemplation," but on mere "grosser emotions and desires" (The "Genius", 260). Such desires, in the case of both Jude and Eugene, are "strong, raging, uncontrollable", and yet almost always go ungratified (The "Genius", 260).

However, when Eugene recovers from the worst effects of his nervous breakdown, it is surprising that he begins his compulsive pursuit of women all over again. On a visit to his hometown, Eugene becomes romantically involved with the coquettish, young and pretty eighteen-year-old, Frieda Roth, who is far less developed intellectually and artistically than she is physically. Eugene discovers that his spirit is refreshed in the company of this girl "with large, clear, blue eyes, a wealth of yellowish-brown hair and a plump but shapely figure" (The "Genius", 274) whose beauty has "nourished his secret dreams" (The "Genius", 275). In the grip of an uncontrollable passion, Eugene carries on with Frieda clandestinely, unable to see that he is once again seeking physical rather than spiritual love. Dreiser, like Hardy, does not condemn the artist's physical instinct perhaps because he agrees it has "nothing in it of the nature of vice." But even so Dreiser faults Eugene's inability to realize that the object of his desire must and should remain unattainable:

> The weakness of Eugene was that he was prone in each of these new conquests to see for the time being the sum and substance of bliss, to rise rapidly in the scale of uncontrollable, exaggerated affection, until he felt that here and nowhere else, now and in this particular form was ideal happiness. He had been in love with Stella, with Margaret, with

> Ruby, with Angela, with Christina, and now with Frieda, quite in this way, and it had taught him nothing as yet concerning love except that it was utterly delightful. ... The tragedies to which he laid himself open by yielding to these spells - he never stopped to think of them. (The "Genius", 285).

As Jude realizes he has "too many passions to make a good clergyman" (Jude, 155), Eugene, too, like Jude, seems to have "too many passions" to make a good artist. However, he abandons his desire for good art, and continues his pursuit of women. Carlotta Wilson, the next woman in Eugene's life, is a tall brunette about his age, "shapely, graceful, with a knowledge of the world." She has known "both the showy and the seamy sides of life" (The "Genius", 332). She has also some interest in art and philosophy, which her teen-age predecessor had not. But the basis of the relationship is physical not spiritual, for Carlotta is essentially sexually emancipated and desirous only of the pleasures of the moment. She scoffs at religion and morality: "She wanted to talk of art and luxury and love" (The "Genius", 347), and everything else is a bore to her. Although married and living in her mother's house, where Eugene is a tenant, she conducts an affair with him, urging him to forget about the poor and the oppressed, with whom his own failures have made him sympathize. As satisfying as his sexual relationship with Carlotta is, Eugene senses that he can never be happy with a thoroughgoing hedonist, no matter how subtle her tastes and ideas are.

After recovering from his nervous breakdown, Eugene does not go back to his art which is now to "all intents and purposes ... dead"

(The "Genius", 298). He surrenders to the flesh when he chooses to make material wealth his standard of good. An old friend and admirer warns him that "'an artist has something which a tradesman can never have. ... He lives in a different world spiritually. ...You have what the tradesman cannot possibly attain - distinction; and you give the world a standard of merit ...'" (The "Genius", 396). "Art distinction might be delightful" (The "Genius", 462) but unluckily, art no longer appeals to Eugene whose concern becomes the business world - how and where he can make the most money. Like Carrie before and Cowperwood after, Eugene becomes totally trapped by the allure of material things and the dazzling opulence of an expensive life-style. As he abandons the life of the soul, and gives himself up completely to a make-believe material existence, he views his advertizing job with a newspaper as an opportunity to achieve success in society's eyes. His thoughts concern nothing other than his desire to use his art for material advantage, "to make a tremendous success of his life, to be looked up to as an imposing financier" (The "Genius", 468). Moreover, when Angela joins him in New York, she is struck as well as taken by the physical and material comforts he provides:

> Art distinction might be delightful, but would it furnish such a table as they were sitting at this morning? Would they have as nice a home and as many friends? Art was glorious, but would they have as many rides and auto trips as they had now? Would she be able to dress as nicely? It took money to produce a variety of clothing - house, street, evening, morning and other wear. Hats at thirty-five and forty dollars were not in the range of artists' wives, as a rule. Did she want to go back to a simpler life for his art's

sake? (The "Genius", 462).

Dreiser, as an omniscient narrator, does not seem critical of Eugene's spiritual fall and his artistic collapse. With a curious mixture of detached irony and perplexed inquiry Dreiser explicitly exposes Eugene's new values through his ruminations:

> Did any artist he knew enjoy what he was enjoying now, even? Why should he worry about being an artist? Did they ever get anywhere? Would the approval of posterity let him ride in an automobile now? ... Poverty be hanged. Posterity could go to the devil! He wanted to live now - not in the approval of posterity (The "Genius", 440).

Furthermore, Dreiser's description of Eugene's physical transformation as a commercial artist becomes of symbolic importance:

> From a lean, pale, artistic soul, wearing a soft hat, he had straightened up and filled out until now he looked more like a business man than an artist, with a derby hat, clothes of the latest cut, a ring of oriental design on his middle finger, and pins and ties which reflected the prevailing modes (The "Genius", 433).

Eugene Witla becomes a gross sensualist and materialist for whom the best in clothes, houses, furniture, and automobiles comprises "the true heaven - the material and spiritual perfection on earth, of which the world was dreaming" (The "Genius", 488).

Eugene thus exchanges his vital artistic sense of the grim, shabby and true beauty in life for a make-believe existence. His commercial career culminates with his investment in "Blue Sea", a dream

of "empire" and a promise of $250,000. In the long run, like Carrie, who achieves material success, but at the end of her story is alone, unhappy, and anxious to discover some higher meaning to life; like Jennie, who is provided with a good income, but finds no consolation for the absence of love; like Cowperwood, that exemplar of the success story, who comes to long for spiritual beauty and love, Eugene too finds no permanent satisfaction in his wealth. He laments the price he has paid: "'My art. My poor old art! A lot I've done to develop my art'" (The "Genius", 518). In the story of Eugene Witla's commercial career, Dreiser insists that the glittering facade of wealth hides a bankruptcy of spiritual values. At the same time Eugene's married life with Angela is becoming increasingly tedious, and the pair, instead of becoming closer together, drift further and further apart.

Through his encounter with Suzanne Dale, a beautiful, intelligent, and refined young debutante of eighteen from a socially prominent family, Eugene's old sense of "perfect harmony with beauty" is revived (The "Genius", 525). He feels he has at last met the one person with whom he can have a perfect union. Although he is attracted to her physically, his desire for her is subordinated to a higher love. Her mind and body, body and soul are perfect, and he is wild about her, "not for lust, but for love" (The "Genius", 536). His attitude toward her, like Jude's attitude toward Sue, is one of almost religious adoration. As Jude wants Sue endlessly because he believes she would "be to him a kindly star, an elevating power, a companion in Anglican worship, a tender friend", Eugene wants Suzanne permanently because she is his

ideal inspiring him to rediscover and re-interpret the true values of life, and creating a vision of those values: "You are the most perfect thing that I have ever known. I think of you awake and asleep. I could paint a thousand pictures of you. My art seems to come back to me through you. If I live I will paint you in a hundred ways" (The "Genius", 539-40). With Suzanne, Eugene awakens to the realization that he has wasted his talent as a commercial artist, and now seems to regain his identity as an artist and recover the Self of the Spirit: "You have changed me so completely, made me over into the artist again. From now on I can paint again. I can paint you'" (The "Genius", 542). He goes back in his mind over the list of the other women in his life and thinks that his feeling in every case "had been combined in some way with lust and evil thinking" (The "Genius", 535). At the beginning he never tries to have sexual relations with her for he believes his love for Suzanne is free of all impurity, and he wants to sustain the Platonic quality of their relationship. Inevitably, however, physical desire does appear: "He was for entering on an illicit relationship after a time without saying anything at all. He was in no hurry, for his feeling for Suzanne was not purely physical, though he wanted her" (The "Genius", 595). Suzanne stands as proof of the ideal for Eugene. She confirms his faith in the divinity of man: "It gave him a clearer insight into a thought he had had for a long while and that was that we came, as Wordsworth expressed it, 'trailing clouds of glory'" (The "Genius", 532). In his attempt for some kind of spiritual transcendence, Eugene tries to hold to his symbol of beauty so that he can escape the destructrive consequences of passion.

The appearance of Suzanne at this point of Eugene's career throws Angela, who is pregnant, into a state of near-panic. However, she and Suzanne's mother intercede in order to end the affair. Eventually, Eugene loses the high-paying executive position he has achieved in the publishing field as well as Suzanne who does not stand by him as resolutely as he wants her to. Disillusioned with her, as Jude is disillusioned with Sue when she leaves him for Phillotson, Eugene feels once more that he has been misled by a woman who is not as pure as he had thought: "as if life had sent him a Judas in the shape of a girl to betray him" (The "Genius", 676).

As Jude loses almost as a conscious decision his will to live after the loss of Sue, in a similar way, Eugene, as a result of losing Suzanne, borders once more on a mental collapse especially after losing his position as Director of the United Magazines Corporation. He turns desperately to religion. His sister Myrtle, a believer in Christian Science, prevails upon him to visit a "practitioner" or minister of that faith. Highly sceptical, Eugene calls at the apartment of Mrs. Johns, the short, unattractive woman whom his sister has recommended. Her unimposing appearance and the tastelessness of the apartment put him off. He cannot believe that God would have chosen somebody as frumpy as she to speak through. However, she impresses him immediately by quoting from the prophet Isaiah, "'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool'" (The "Genius", 705). Although he has not heard the quotation for years, Eugene finds that it appeals to him deeply, as had all the "Hebraic bursts of prophetic imagery in the past" (The "Genius", 705).

After the meeting with Mrs. Johns, in which she explains to him the basic tenets of Christian Science, Eugene goes home turning the whole question of the existence of God over in his mind. At home he opens Science and Health, a basic text of Christian Science, and turns to a page at random. The passage to which he turns seems to speak directly to the central problem of his life: "'Carnal beliefs defraud us'" (The "Genius", 709). Eugene wants to believe in the truth of Mary Baker Eddy's words, but he does not want to become a religious enthusiast. Religionists strike him as silly. As he turns to his newspaper to escape from his problems, Eugene finds staring at him from an inside page a passage from Francis Thompson's religious poem, "The Hound of Heaven":

> I fled Him, down the nights and down the day;
> I fled Him, down the arches of the years ...
> (The "Genius", 709).

Obviously, that is what Eugene had been trying to do when he turned to the daily paper - flee from God. But the hound of heaven will not let him escape. He reopens Science and Health and begins reading again.

At first Eugene finds the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy preposterous. The prejudices which he has built up against Christianity and the Bible make it difficult for him to continue reading Mrs.Eddy, who reinterpreted Christ's message in the light of her revelation. He throws the book down several times, only to pick it up again, indicating how deeply ambivalent he is about religion (The "Genius", 693). Although he has come to feel that the Sermon on the Mount is too idealistic, he

had once, we learn for the first time, been deeply influenced by it. He still finds the words Christ spoke to the multitude on the mountain thrilling and moving: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." This passage from the Sermon on the Mount had always struck Eugene as so beautiful that he feels now it must be true (The "Genius", 694). By degrees, he warms to Christian Science, and instead of rejecting it as quackery, as he has been disposed to do, he concludes that it is not very different from the other major religions. Mary Baker Eddy believed that God was love and truth. "'Truth, love, over all, and all'", was the way in which Mrs. Johns put it (The "Genius", 707). Studying the matter, Eugene concludes that the God whom the Christian Scientists worship is not basically different from the God whom the prophets proclaimed in the Old Testament.

When Eugene sees Christian Science as part of the prophetic religious tradition, he views it with new reverence and respect. If there is a true religion, it must, Eugene feels, be the one which the Jews before any other race had developed through the divine inspiration of the prophets (The "Genius", 695). In his reading he learns that the old prophets when they first appeared seemed "little more than whirling dervishes" who worked "themselves up into wild transports and frenzies" (The "Genius", 695), but who nevertheless had always set forth "something that was astonishingly spiritual and great" (The "Genius", 695-696). The prophetic tradition has particular appeal for him now, perhaps because his conception of himself as an artist bears some resemblance to the prophets of ancient times, and his own periods of

insanity, instead of making him a misfit, could be taken as evidence of his divine mission. Eugene occasionally thinks that he is artistic in a prophetic sense:

> All his life he had fancied that he was leading a more or less fated life, principally more. He thought that his art was a gift, that he had in a way been sent to revolutionize art in America, or carry it one step farther forward and that nature was thus constantly sending its apostles or special representatives over whom it kept watch and in whom it was well pleased (The "Genius", 580).

In abandoning art for business following his first mental breakdown, Eugene was no longer able to function as an apostle or prophet for some higher aim, for he had given himself over to materialism. When Eugene lost the wealth and position he had ruthlessly acquired, Dreiser viewed his fall as an act of retribution by higher Powers. To describe the pathos which Eugene experienced, Dreiser turns to the Bible and the prophets. "The prophets of the Old Testament discerned it clearly enough", he explains, "for they were forever pronouncing the fate of those whose follies were in opposition to the course of righteousness and who were made examples of by a beneficent and yet awful power" (The "Genius", 685). Then he quotes the passage from the prophet Daniel which he considers applicable to Eugene:

> Thus saith the Lord: Because thou hast lifted thyself up against the God of Heaven, and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou and thy Lords, thy wives and concubines, have drank wine in them, and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone. ... God hath

> numbered thy Kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting; thy Kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians (The "Genius", 685).

Dreiser in effect analogizes Eugene in the above-mentioned passage with Belshazzar, and Eugene's money and position, which he lost after the loss of Suzanne, with Babylon, which God took away from Belshazzar and gave to his enemies. In this particular passage, Dreiser's attitude toward Eugene's downfall seems righteously approving: "It seems a tribute to that providence which shapes our ends, which continues perfect in tendency however vilely we may overlay its brightness with the rust of our moral corruption ..." (The "Genius", 686).

At the time when Eugene embraces the teachings of Christian Science and adopts a belief in "the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent mind of God" (The "Genius", 699), Angela dies in childbirth. His new daughter whom he names Angela, serves as a comfort to him, and, in the meantime, he "reached a state not of abnegation, but of philosophic open-mindedness or agnosticism" (The "Genius", 726).

In the death of the wife and the birth of the daughter, Dreiser apparently tries to resolve a central conflict in the novel, and in the person of Eugene - as well as probably in his life - the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. The daughter is a reincarnation of Eugene's wife and his teen-age ideal Suzanne with one vitally important difference: the daughter is free of the disturbing sexuality that had plagued Eugene in his relationship with his wife and with Suzanne, and

with all attractive women. For the first time in his life, Eugene loves a female with a pure love. Eugene calls her his "little flower girl", and "sweet little kiddie" (The "Genius", 736), and he looks forward to someday building a house in which he, his daughter and her future husband might all live happily. The "Genius" closes with Eugene tucking his daughter into bed, and going out and looking up into the sky, "great art dreams" welling up in his soul.

The conflict between the flesh and the spirit is reflected in Eugene's art, as well as in his life. As a painter, Eugene alternately follows two opposing theories of art. The first is religious, or prophetic, and is based upon a sympathetic portrayal of human suffering. On the one hand, Eugene is the prophetic artist who chooses the poor and the oppressed as his main subjects, and treats them compassionately in his paintings. He likes painting the down-and-out, the lost, the hopeless and homeless. Eugene, we are once told, "sympathized most with sombre types, and was constantly drawing something which represented grim care" (The "Genius", 246). He takes common, even unpleasant subjects and treats them with respect, or even reverence. One of the most moving and controversial paintings in his first exhibition is of a Negro trash collector on a frosty and freezing winter morning in a New York ghetto (The "Genius", 236). In reviewing Eugene's first exhibition, a critic, Luke Severas, sees in his work that quality which characterizes it as prophetic:

> A true sense of the pathetic, a true sense of the dramatic, the ability to endow color - not with its photographic value, though to the current thought it may seem so - but with its higher

> spiritual significance; the ability to indict life with its own grossness, to charge it prophetically with its own meanness and cruelty in order that mayhap it may heal itself; the ability to see wherein is beauty - even in shame and pathos and degradation; of such is this man's work (The "Genius", 237).

Luke Severas, in the above-mentioned passage, perceives the spiritual basis of Eugene's art, as does Hudson Dulla, the art director of Truth magazine, who urges Eugene not to become corrupted by material success. A minor character, Dulla is nevertheless important in The "Genius" in somewhat the way in which Ames was in Sister Carrie. Dulla is the voice of Eugene's conscience.

The other theory of art which Eugene follows could be called purely materialistic. A short while after his arrival in Chicago as a struggling young artist, Eugene visits an art gallery to see a controversial painting of a nude by the French artist Bouguereau. Eugene admires Bouguereau and stares avidly at the nude until the guard asks him to move on. Two tough-minded Nietzschean-type individuals urge the young Eugene to take a more hedonistic, less humanistic view of art. Temple Boyle, his first art teacher in Chicago, is a cold-blooded practical man who brings to art the naturalistic values of the social Darwinist: "He took art as a business man takes business, and he had no time for the misfit, the fool, or the failure" (The "Genius", 70). Boyle loves the beauty of the female form, and he urges Eugene, who is painting the nude model in class, to strive for an icy sexuality: "'A little colder, my boy, a little colder. There's sex in that'" (The "Genius", 71). The art dealer who gives Eugene the chance to display

his first exhibition operates his gallery in accordance with the "Survival of the Fittest" philosophy. M. Charles does not believe in the necessity for any sort of sympathy in art, any more than in life. Although his work does not reflect it, Eugene formulates a theory of life based on human desire and physical beauty, the perfect embodiment of which, he feels, is the eighteen-year-old girl. "The beauty of eighteen. No more and no less. That was the standard, and the history of the world proved it" (The "Genius", 296). Art, literature, history and poetry - everything revolves around man's desire for beautiful young women. Having arrived at this theory of life, Eugene is more easily able to give up art for business. "Why should he worry about being an artist?" He asks himself, ignoring his friend Dulla's advice about the moral responsibility and distinction of the artist even though poor. "Did they ever get anywhere?" (The "Genius", 440). Like Carrie, Eugene shirks the responsibility of the artist for a profitable career. Moving in the upper-class world of New York, he tells himself that he still cares about the poor. But he does not show his concern by painting them sympathetically, as he should have. Instead he gives handouts to beggars on the street, as Carrie did.

At the end of the novel, after his business career collapses because of his philandering, Eugene returns to painting "swiftly, feverishly, brilliantly ... everything that came into his mind" (The "Genius", 729). Once more he chooses his subjects from among the lower classes - labourers, washerwomen, and drunkards. However, he no longer seems to be painting prophetically. His attitude toward the poor changes; it lacks the tolerance of human weakness, the sympathy with

human suffering. He sees the poor as the "mob", and he is not so much involved with as he is fascinated by them. "The mental, fuzzy-wuzzy maundering and meanderings of the mob fascinated him" (The "Genius", 729). With his detached attitude, it is not difficult for him to turn away from the poor completely in his painting. In banks and public buildings he paints murals which are inspired not by any feelings of social consciousness or religious concern, but by the memory of his lost love, the beautiful eighteen-year-old, Suzanne Dale.

In the final scene in The "Genius", Eugene wonders "'what a sweet welter life is - how rich, how tender, how grim, how like a colorful symphony'" (The "Genius", 736). As he stands looking up into the starry sky, dreaming great dreams of art, the reader is given neither a clue of what those dreams are, nor an idea of where he is headed, nor even what kind of an artist is he going to be in the future. Will he be "an apostle of nature?" A prophet? Is he even a genius, as the title puts it? The quotation marks which Drieser put around the word "genius" in the tile indicate Dreiser's uncertainty, for in writing the novel he seems to have been as confused about his aims as the character he created. The "Genius" remains a very poor successor to The Financier and The Titan.

Certainly, the ending of The "Genius" seems weak in comparison with the more dramatic ending of Jude the Obscure. This is because the last fifty pages of The "Genius" dealing with Christian Science seem rather weak, confusing and "clouded with mysticism"[9] as Charles Shapiro's comment suggests. Upon closer scrutiny, however, one observes

Dreiser attempting, for the first time, a definite philosophical statement. Unfortunately, Dreiser falls short because he had no clear, positive statement to make. Consequently, he selected certain parts of a religion that were immediately applicable to the conclusion of his novel. In particular, Dreiser was obviously attracted to Christian Science's rejection of foreordination. This rejection gave Eugene the total freedom of will so necessary in a materialistic society. Furthermore, Dreiser needed a restorative potion for Eugene at that point in the novel. What Dreiser selected was the Christian Scientist's belief in spiritual awakening and the power of the mind to heal both physically and emotionally. Eugene, afterwards, comes to love life, and again he becomes the optimistic individual.

Nevertheless, The "Genius" did not answer the problem which had emerged in Sister Carrie: whether Dreiser's chief protagonists were chiefly spiritual or materialistic; whether they were inspired artists or egotistic neurotics; and whether religion was the highest truth or, as Eugene fears, "a sickening jest". Eugene Witla, however, is a character in bondage to desire; and Clyde Griffiths, in Dreiser's next novel, - is equally and tragically so. Clyde's driving desires, as we will see in our next chapter, lead him through many doors, the last of which, is the door to the electric chair.

1. Florence Emily Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1928 (London, 1962), p.218

2. Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (New York: W.W.Norton, 1978), p.23. All further page references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically within the text.

3. Thomas p.Riggio, "Another Two Dreisers: The Artist as 'Genius'", Studies in the Novel, 9 (1977), 124-125.

4. Theodore Dreiser, The "Genius" (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1915), p.12. All further page references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically within the text.

5. Philip L.Gerber, Theodore Dreiser (Boston, 1964), p.113.

6. As quoted in Gerber, Theodore Dreiser, p.120.

7. Helen Dreiser, My Life with Dreiser (Cleveland: World Press, 1951), p.81.

8. Richard B.Hovey and Ruth S.Ralph, "Dreiser's the 'Genius': Motivation and Structure", Hartford Studies in Literature: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Criticism, No.2 (1970), 174.

9. Charles Shapiro, Theodore Dreiser: Our Bitter Patriot (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), p.64.

Chapter V

The Tragedies of Unfulfilled Aims and Aspirations: Jude the Obscure and An American Tragedy

Jude the Obscure (1895) is Hardy's most relentlessly pessimistic novel. The novel's presentation of human possibility stresses man's limited potential and shows him relatively powerless in the face of forces (both natural and social) beyond his control. Even the best of intentions avail little in fulfilling one's goals, and the main character dies alone muttering a quotation full of despair while the mocking sounds of cheers for those who succeeded in doing what he failed to do ring in his ears. The argument that such a novel can still make a positive, even encouraging, statement about human worth must demonstrate that there is a subtle level of suggestion woven into the fabric of the novel that implies that there is hope for humanity; that there is great dignity in the human condition despite all of man's limitations; and that man can attain an elevated status despite his failure in wordly terms.

A survey of the criticism of Jude the Obscure and An American Tragedy (1925) shows us how far criticism has gone in considering the tragic effects of both stories, and whether or not the two novels are in fact tragedies. One of the most favourable reviews of Jude the Obscure was written by the American novelist William Dean Howells, who praises the return of an English writer to the Greek notion of tragedy

in a book which seems to him one of the most tragical he has ever read. Howells defends the character of Jude as "one of inviolable dignity",[1] and praises the unity of the novel and its air of tragic inevitability:

> All the characters, indeed, have the appealing quality of human creatures really doing what they must while seeming to do what they will. It is not a question of blaming them or praising them; they are in the necessity of what they do and what they suffer.[2]

He concludes his perceptive review with a reference to the "solemn and lofty effect of a great tragedy," and the comment: "this tragedy of fate suggests the classic singleness of means as well as the classic singleness of motive."[3]

Later critics were probably even kinder. Lascelles Abercrombie, writing in 1912, describes Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure as Hardy's greatest novels, and he praises Hardy's last novel for "its amazing insight into human nature" and the "terrible cogency of its tragic motion;"[4] he compares "Jude's history of baffled aspiration" to "an argument fate holds with itself intensely reasoning whether man's personal effort can have any final value in the course of its existence. ..."[5] He plays down the importance of the sexual material and the marriage theme:

> For this troublesome question of love and marriage comes in as inevitable incident of the main story, a necessary consequence, not otherwise important, of the psychological premises. The whole point of the business is, that Jude's marriage with Arabella and his illegal love for Sue were equally ruinous to the

> achievement of his desire. His disaster is, that he has anything to do with women at all; for the fashion of his nature is such, that no woman can be to him anything but a representative of that great assimilating power of the general world which is his spirit's enemy - since it is all for holding him back from realizing himself.[6]

Perhaps the most famous argument against Jude the Obscure as a tragedy was offered by Arthur Mizener, writing in the 1940 Hardy Centennial Issue of the Southern Review. According to Mizener Hardy was unable to present a tragic vision because he could not reconcile what he saw as reality - "the ingrained evil of human and animal life" - with the possibility of a paradisiacal state beyond this world.[7] Hardy has evolved a moral code which is "a secularized version of the Sermon on the Mount," Mizener claims, and the major theme of Jude the Obscure is the development of this code within the mind of Jude himself.[8] But because Hardy "had no place outside of the actual world of time where he could visualize" the development of human potentialities implicit in the code, he implied that they would eventually be fulfilled on this earth.[9] But the hope for an earthly Paradise, according to Mizener, is in direct contradiction to Hardy's belief that evil is ingrained in the nature of things. And it is this internal contradiction, says Mizener, which constitutes an irreparable weakness in Jude as a tragedy.

Mizener's objections, however, have not gone unanswered. In an article entitled "Thomas Hardy's Tragic Hero" Ted R.Spivey argues that Hardy's heroes, including Jude, are essentially romantics who seek a "higher state of personal development" which is not possible in Hardy's

universe:

> Jude seeks both prophetic power and intellectual development as well as the ecstasy of union with Sue. After his defeat he acknowledges that he and Sue had lived fifty years too soon. Already there is a possibility that poor students will be helped. This, I take it, is what Mr.Mizener would call idealism that is placed in the future instead of "outside of time". Actually, though, the world as Hardy knew it could never allow heroes like Jude and Sue to fulfill themselves. Simply giving scholarships to poor students might help Jude to become a young prophet, but it could never bring Sue and Jude into that heightened state of ecstasy which spirits long for.[10]

Spivey, in making his case for the Hardyan romantic hero, concedes that Hardy may have even been somewhat inconsistent in his philosophical outlook: "He was capable both of a tragic apprehension of this world and a belief that the world might, in some cases, be made better for men."[11] Nevertheless, Spivey denies that this inconsistency detracts from the essential greatness of Hardy's heroes or his tragic vision.

Whether or not Mizener's objections to Jude the Obscure as a tragedy are valid or have been successfully refuted, the novel itself continues to be a source of critical confusion and controversy. Consider, for example, Douglas Brown's well-known study of Hardy's works which contends that his strength as a novelist is centred in his ability to portray agricultural life, and specifically the agricultural environment of his immediate historical situation in England in the late nineteenth century.[12] In so far as Jude moves outside this world it is perhaps a failure. Brown considers that the novel presents a "limited

experience" and thus lacks the universality and breadth of insight characteristic of great tragic art.[13].

Other modern critics whose assessment of Jude the Obscure deserve consideration are Albert J.Guerard, Bert G.Hornback and Jean R. Brooks. Albert J.Guerard in his 1949 study of Hardy's fiction, considers Michael Henchard as Hardy's only authentic hero. He is Hardy's "only tragic hero," and furthermore, "one of the greatest tragic heroes in all fiction."[14] Jude, although "a very substantial character"[15] is not a tragic hero - "if only because he is a 'modern!'"[16] Guerard bases this judgment partly on his perception of Jude's dying words as a "condemnation of the cosmos" rather than a statement of self-knowledge,[17] whereas, according to Guerard, "the tragic attitude lays the blame not on the stars but on ourselves. ..."[18] Jude also seems less tragic than Henchard because he "does not resist the outward and inward destiny of his actual life"[19] in the same way Henchard does; and, says Guerard, because "he cannot resist or overcome his function in the book which is arbitrary as well as symbolic." Guerard sees Jude as a "passive victim" of other characters, of various conventions, prejudices and social institutions of the late nineteenth century, and of "the unjust cosmos in general."[20] Such a view of Jude's helplessness does not lead to an assessment of his character as exalted or tragic mainly because "the cosmos" from Guerard's point of view "whether just or unjust or different, necessarily dwarfs tragedy."[21]

Bert G. Hornback, in The Metaphor of Chance, takes a view almost entirely opposite to that of Guerard. Rather than considering Jude a

passive victim of circumstance, he sees him as "caught in a world of tragic possibilities and fated to come to terms with himself in that world."[22] Hornback focuses on Hardy's setting "in space and in time,"[23] and claims that, for Hardy, man is "free within his environment; and he must come to terms both with himself and with his environment."[24] Although human beings cannot change the world, they can "revise the patterns of their lives by asserting their wills, by understanding themselves in relation to the world and thus averting the pathetic disaster of dumb defeat."[25]

Thus, according to this view, Jude can be regarded as triumphant despite his defeat by external circumstance. Because he consciously chooses the means of his own death, because he is destroyed "not by his fate, or by perversity, or by God, but by himself,"[26] Jude achieves dignity and a limited freedom:

> In his final consciousness of why it must be, and in the act of his will which controls it, he makes of that destruction his triumph. Jude's character, like every hero's, has been his fate, and has been the making of his destiny.[27]

Hornback's approach to Jude's character contains elements of the traditional Aristotelian concept of the tragic hero. The conception of the hero who is basically admirable but who because of a weakness or a flaw in character brings about his own downfall or destruction, is decidedly Aristotelian. The idea that the hero may triumph spiritually even though he is defeated by external forces may also be seen as traditional, for it is implied by the classical hero's gaining of

enlightenment or self-knowledge through his suffering, and the consequent purgation of the emotions of pity and fear in the audience.

Finally, let us look at a recent critic who offers great insight into the distinctive modernity of Jude the Obscure. Jean R.Brooks, in Thomas Hardy: The Poetic Structure, treats Hardy's major poetry as well as his novels and the Dynasts. She calls Jude "as poetic a novel as its predecessors":

> Its kind of poetry looks back to the epic, defiant poetry of the Book of Job and forward to the grey modern note of expected pain. ... The novel's serious concern with the ultimates of man's fate-loneliness, loss, frustration, failure, death - makes its subject as inherently poetic as the Bible or Greek tragedy. ... The most prominent mythic echoes come from the Bible and Greek literature. Jude's consistent heroic prototypes are the defiant, suffering Job, Tantalus, and Sisyphus - the hero who provided Camus with an image for modern man's doom of futile effort. ... These resonances from two great shaping cultures help to define the Hebraic and Hellenic attitudes, self-denial and self-assertion, to the modern predicament.[28]

Furthermore, Brooks asserts that the final effect of the novel is one of utter despair or futility, for the "naked pain felt in Jude the Obscure intensely affirms the value of life's potentialities."[29] Jude's and Sue's suffering brings them "to a recognition of their role as pioneers of a new, more sensitive stage of development."[30] This is the view which Hardy himself laid claim to, calling it "evolutionary meliorism."[31]

In a rather similar manner, An American Tragedy, on its first appearance, thirty years after Jude the Obscure, was met with a divided critical response. Unlike most of Dreiser's earlier novels, An American Tragedy in some quarters was given a cordial critical reception. To Joyce Cary, as John McAleer points out, An American Tragedy, was a "great book". To H.G.Wells it was "one of the great novels of this century," and to Joseph Wood Krutch, "the greatest American novel of our generation." Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Scott Fitzgerald, James Agee, John Dos Passos, Richard Wright, Robert P.Warren, Saul Bellow and Norman Mailer have also lauded and applauded Dreiser's achievement as a unique masterpiece among the books of the day. More recently C.P.Snow has written: "An American Tragedy has its place among the 'great' novels in a sense, and to an extent, that no other American novel has, and, I might add, in a sense not possessed by any English novel since Little Dorrit."[32]

It is clear from the critical reception of the novel that both commentators and critics have been concerned first with the technical merit of the book as a great artistic achievement in the naturalistic mode, especially in relation to its successful depiction of man objectively viewed as a helpless victim of heredity and environment. Robert Shafer, a critic of Hardy and Dreiser, for instance, praises the book as "more skilfully, faithfully, and consistently executed on the naturalistic level than any of its author's earlier novels." Shafer, however, goes on to suggest that its success as a work of naturalism explains its limitations as a work of art:

> ... {I}t contains no single element of tragedy in any legitimate sense of the word, and it impresses thoughtful readers as a mere sensational newspaper story long drawn out. In other words, in proportion as Mr.Dreiser contrives to accomplish his self-imposed task he has nothing to tell us except that there is nothing to tell about life until it can be reduced even below the apparent level of animal existence, to the point where it becomes a meaningless chaos of blind energies.[33]

In his "Of Crime and Punishment", F.O.Matthiessen discusses the novel's theme and form. He notes that in writing An American Tragedy, Dreiser "was also writing a documentary novel, as he did in his study of the businessman."[34] Clyde Griffiths's aspirations, as Matthiessen argues, are like those of Cowperwood, "to rise in the world, to be a success as measured by money and social position. ..."[35] Living on his own, and desperate for love and companionship, Clyde becomes clandestinely involved in a relationship with a girl, Roberta Alden, which results in her pregnancy. Prior to the conclusion of Roberta's pregnancy, a second girl, Sondra Finchley, from a higher social class, appears upon the scene to feed Clyde's dreams of riches and a more sophisticated life style. In his helpless effort to escape Roberta, who is a barrier to his ambitions, Clyde involves himself with a murder that leads to his execution. In this case what Dreiser studied, as Matthiessen points out, was "the sexual and social forces that overpowered Clyde and swept him before them until, seeing no way out, in his shallow immaturity he finally plotted murder."[36] "Yet Roberta's actual death was accidental" because "the boat into which Clyde lured her upon the lake overturned at a moment when he had not willed it." Nevertheless, he wished her death, and "the ultimate range of Dreiser's

theme thereby became the terrible and baffling problem of justice."[37] Matthiessen, however, in his discussion comes to the conclusion that in the creation of Clyde, Dreiser "presented a young character so dominated by fate that we do not have the catharsis that can come only out of some mature struggle against doom."[38] And by doing so, "Dreiser has not shaped a tragedy in any of the traditional uses of the term, and yet he has written out of a profoundly tragic sense of man's fate."[39]

Furthermore, Richard Lehan in his critical discussion of An American Tragedy, echoes Matthiessen's conclusion that "Dreiser is using the word 'tragedy' in the modern and not the Aristotelian sense of the word. He believes that man is determined by forces beyond his control, primarily environmental and hereditary."[40] Affirming the successive suggestions of Shafer, Matthiessen and Lehan, Irving Howe, in an illuminating article titled "Dreiser and the Tragedy" also points out that An American Tragedy "depends upon one of the most deeply-grounded fables in our culture. Clyde Griffiths, the figure in Dreiser's novel who acts it out, is not in any traditional sense either heroic or tragic." This is most pointedly shown in the fact that, unlike Jude, Clyde "has almost no assertive will, he lacks any large compelling idea, he reveals no special gift for the endurance of pain. In his puny self he is little more than a clouded reflection of the puny world about him."[41] What Howe sees as tragic about Clyde is his youth wherein "concentrated the tragedy of human waste: energies, talents, affections all unused - and at least in our time the idea of human waste comprises an essential meaning of tragedy."[42] And as Howe further adds, it is this "idea to which Dreiser kept returning both in his fiction and his

essays":

> When one was dead one was dead for all time. Hence the reason for the heartbreak over failure here and now; the awful tragedy of a love lost, a youth never properly enjoyed. Think of living and yet not living in so thrashing a world as this, the best of one's hours passing unused or not properly used. Think of seeing this tinkling phantasmagoria of pain and pleasure, beauty and all its sweets, go by, and yet being compelled to be a bystander, a mere onlooker, enhungered and never satisfied.[43]

Howe does not only see the book as "the tragedy of human waste"; in the same year, and in another issue of The New Republic, he generously lavishes praise on the book considering it as Dreiser's masterpiece:

> Reading An American Tragedy once again, after a lapse of more than twenty years, I have found myself greatly moved and shaken by its repeated onslaughts of narrative, its profound immersion in human suffering, its dredging up of those shapeless desires which lie, as if in fever, just below the plane of consciousness. How much more vibrant this book is than the usual accounts of it in recent criticism might lead one to suppose! It is a masterpiece, nothing less.[44]

Moreover, on the fiftieth anniversary of the novel, the novelist James Farrell interprets the tragic aspect of the book in terms totally different from his predecessors. Farrell sees the novel as powerfully portraying American society and showing how its values become distorted in a tragic way. In this context, the Green-Davidson Hotel, where Clyde gets his job as a bell-boy, becomes for Clyde an ideal college. In

other words, it becomes a first-rate school of false values based essentially "upon luxury and desire."[45] These values, as Farrell states, are "false in terms of the worth of human beings and of the things that make for human growth."[46] When Clyde moves to work in his uncle's factory in Lycurgus he continues to "see worth in terms of what is luxury to him."[47] He starts off his first love affair with a poor farm-girl, Roberta, on a secretive footing which stamps the whole affair with a kind of falseness and prevents Clyde from entering into a completely honest relationship with her. By the time Roberta becomes pregnant, Clyde has already been enraptured by Sondra, a rich debutante whose name appears every now and then in the newspaper society column - she belongs to a world of not only easy leisure and pleasure for Clyde, but one which promises tangible success in the future. Clyde's effort, as Farrell points out, "to live by these false values establishes, documents, and drives home the tragedy."[48] Farrell goes further in asserting that

> An American Tragedy would be a tragedy even if there were no deaths in it. It would be a tragedy in this sense: that Clyde Griffiths abandons and thinks to murder a girl, Roberta Alden, because she is pregnant and interferes with his getting on in life by marrying a much more trivial though rich girl, Sondra Finchley, who seems to have much less capacity to develop, is less warm and human than Roberta. And that is tragic.[49]

Farrell lays the blame not on Clyde, but on society. He considers society responsible in the first degree for Clyde's fatal error because it sustained Clyde's beliefs in ideals and values which are fundamentally false.

Finally, we have to consider Robert H. Elias's discussion of the Tragedy. Elias's article in the first issue of Prospects of 1975 sees the novel as Dreiser's statement about the tragic consequences of a society in which the individual believes his self-realization is possible only in emotional disengagement from others, in the isolation of unfettered self-reliance, and in which the elimination of differences rather than the clash of wills is the accepted ideal. Intensely alone and removed from the actual world, Clyde, writes Elias, "moves amid abstraction ... and in the view of others is ultimately an abstraction himself. Clearly Dreiser intends it to be this way."[50]

Despite the critical controversy which surrounds it - particularly over the question of its apparent lack of tragic depth and its protagonist's lack of heroic or tragic stature - An American Tragedy continues to be admired as Dreiser's "greatest success". As Warren writes:

> Published in 1925, it is the work in which he could look backward from the distance of middle-age and evaluate his own experience of success and failure. We feel, in this book, the burden of the personal pathos, the echo of the personal struggle to purge the unworthy aspirations. We also feel, in this book, the burden of a historical moment, the moment of the Great Boom which climaxed the period from Grant to Coolidge, the half century in which the new America of industry and finance capitalism was hardening into shape and its secret forces were emerging to dominate all life. In other words, An American Tragedy can be taken as a document, both personal and historical, and it is often admired, and defended, in these terms.[51]

An American Tragedy is divided into three books, and each book has an entirely different setting. Book One opens with the Griffiths's family settling in Kansas City at a little preaching mission while Clyde is twelve years of age and already ashamed of his parents' way of life. A pagan at heart, Clyde rebels instinctively against the dreary mission and the street-preaching, and in his effort to escape this dull environment, he eventually finds work as soda-clerk in a drug store.

Now growing up, Clyde moves on - and in his view up - by becoming a bell-boy at the Kansas city principal hotel, the Green-Davidson. In a few weeks he learns how to dress, drink and how to find the delights and duplicities of sex outside the hotel. And because of the sensuous side of his nature, Clyde acquires a desire for a richer life defined in terms of what he sees in the hotel and what he hears about from the other bell-boys. Meeting a common girl by the name of Hortense Briggs, Clyde decides, in pursuit of her, to deceive his mother about his earnings, and considerably cuts down the resources he brings home for his needy family. When his mother appeals to him for money to help his pregnant sister, Esta, he rejects her plea because he is saving his resources for the seduction of Hortense.

Book One of An American Tragedy ends with an accident when Clyde, Hortense and some other of their friends take a trip into the country in a borrowed automobile. On the way back home the auto runs down a child. Terribly frightened, and unable to stand the scene because he thinks it will cause him the loss of his job, Clyde makes his escape crawling through a field in fear. After a lapse of three years, Book Two begins

with Clyde working at the Union League Club in Chicago. While working in this athletic club where only wealthy and well-to-do people come, Clyde encounters his uncle Samuel Griffiths from New York, a successful manufacturer of the Griffiths Collar & Shirt Company. Clyde's trim figure and good looks impress the uncle whose uneasiness of conscience over previous neglect of his brother's family make him listen to the young man's plea that he be given a chance to make his way in the shirt factory.

When Clyde goes to Lycurgus, in upstate New York, and starts working in the factory, he occasionally walks past the residential area of the upper-class of the town imagining what it would be like to live like those who are materially better off than he is and looking forward to the time when he will be part of such a world. In his work Clyde proves as capable as his cousin Gilbert, Samuel's son, whom he closely resembles. What Clyde does not know is that his cousin Gilbert resents his presence in Lycurgus because it is a threat to his own business and social status. What makes Gilbert more resentful is the look-alike resemblance between him and the bell-hop. Partly because of this irritating chance resemblance, Gilbert works to prevent his family from admitting the young boy into their circle.

Feeling alienated and lonely, and desperate for love and companionship, Clyde cannot resist the temptation of a gay, gracious and good-looking girl in the factory, Roberta Alden. With growing sexual passion, Clyde forces Roberta to give in and she yields herself to him out of love. Soon she becomes pregnant. In the meantime, Clyde has

already become involved with the upper-class Sondra; he continues his relationship with Roberta secretly, lying to her about his emotional engagement with Sondra, and revealing nothing of his entanglement with Roberta to Sondra. When Roberta's position demands a solution - after the failure of all attempts at abortion - Clyde plans to murder her. In the boat in Big Bittern lake, Clyde's courage fails him and he is unable to strike a death blow and go through with his plotted murder. However, Roberta stumbles toward him in an unbearable gesture of sympathy; her unwanted solace repels him, and with a camera in his hand he strikes out at her, cutting her face and head; the boat overturns; Roberta sinks down drowning; and Clyde, ignoring her pleas for help, swims swiftly ashore and flees the scene through the woods to Sondra.

Book Three opens with the discovery of Roberta's body and the search for Clyde. Having left a series of clues behind him, Clyde is soon found and taken into custody. He is tried in a rural area that happens to be one of the most conservative and moralistic in the country. As "chance did not aid" Clyde in finding a way out of Roberta's trouble (Tragedy, 455), chance does not aid him in his trial. His case comes up at just the time when the district attorney can use the publicity of a successful prosecution in the coming elections. Clyde is almost universally regarded as guilty from the outset. His defence and subsequent appeal fail, and Clyde is finally offered in sacrifice to an angry society.

Jude the Obscure and An American Tragedy have much more in common than any of the previously discussed novels of Hardy and Dreiser. Both

heroes, Jude and Clyde, are presented to us in depth, with Jude's sensuality in conflict with his spiritual or intellectual aspirations, and Clyde's emotional impulses sometimes in conflict with his generally materialistic aims. But the basic nature and aspirations of each character differ. While Jude seeks from the start ethical, religious and intellectual goals, Clyde always wants material comforts, money, pleasure, and status. It is clear that as an idealist, Jude was acutely tuned to a distant drummer whose music promised higher achievement than mere day-to-day existence. Yet his desire for spiritual and mental elevation was thwarted mercilessly and surely, his very virtues becoming vices in the eyes of society. Clyde was on the opposite end of the spectrum, wanting only material satisfaction; but he was undermined just as effectively as Jude. Thus each is burdened with an ambition, and the ambition of each is marked by failure. Even if the one is an idealist, and the other a materialist, the destiny of each character is the same. Each is frustrated by forces in his nature, his society, and his circumstances.

Both heroes are seen as products of heredity to some degree. Both come from poverty-stricken families without redeeming characteristics. An orphan, Jude has a background completely unsympathetic to his nature and his goals. His father so mistreated Jude's mother that she drowned herself.[52] Through the course of the novel, it is hinted that another relative was sent to the gallows because he tried to steal the coffin of his dead child (Jude, 223). In general, Jude's family passed on to him nervous tendencies and a history of perversity.

Likewise, Clyde comes from a poor home where the parents lack true understanding of the children and of each other. Clyde's father leaves family management to his wife. Clyde's brother and sisters are slow and seemingly lacking even the desire for survival. The mother possesses a steely endurance, but is rather cold despite her professed love for humanity. The "sterile moralism"[53] of Clyde's parents provides an empty emotional background for him, just as Jude's uncaring great aunt provides a home without any warmth. There is a barrier between Clyde and his mother who "would never understand his craving for ease and luxury, for beauty, for love - his particular kind of love that went with show, pleasure, wealth, position, his eager and immutable aspirations and desires."[54]

In physical traits the two young men are strikingly similar. Jude is presented as a "young man with a forcible, meditative, and earnest rather than handsome cast of countenance" (Jude, 62-63), a dark complexion, dark eyes, black curly hair and a closely-trimmed black beard (Jude, 63). Clyde has a "straight, well-cut nose, high white forehead, wavy, glossy, black hair, eyes that were black and rather melancholy at times" (Tragedy, 27). Apart from their physical resemblances, both men are characterized by the same melancholic disposition evidenced in their demeanours. "If he could only prevent himself growing up! He did not want to be a man," Jude muses (Jude, 17). Of Clyde, Dreiser notes that " ... to say the truth, Clyde had a soul that was not destined to grow up" (Tragedy, 189). And Clyde's mind is more "drawn to romance than to reality" (Tragedy, 834).

Further similarities strike us as we find both men are incredibly innocent and naive. Jude's innocence probably explains his inability to reject youthful idealism, and Clyde's naivety explains his belief in his ability to climb up the social ladder. This innocence makes it difficult for each to relate to the actual world and have a chance of attaining his goals. Clyde's innocent outlook makes it ditticult for him to understand the workings of an intricately devised society. And whenever he is in a complex situation, he is confused because his mind is too simple to cope with it. Both, Jude and Clyde, share this naivety and are lost in situations demanding sophistication or cunning.

The physical propensities of each character are essential to an understanding of the initial forces shaping both Jude and Clyde. Both are victims of the sexual impulses that work to overcome their judgment. Jude's involvement with Arabella has often been attributed to his sexual responses to her, but he was attracted to Sue, as well, at least partly because of his sensuous nature: "For whatever Sue's virtues, talents or ecclesiastical saturation, it was certain that those items were not at all the cause of his affection for her" (Jude, 80). Jude loves Sue not just for his intellectual rapport with her, but for her physical presence as well.

Similarly, Clyde is drawn to Roberta not only becasue she is gay and gracious, but because he can imagine a sexual relationship with her. And Sondra attracts him not merely for her beauty, but for what she represents in the society he wishes to enter. Except for Roberta, whose soft prettiness and gentle ways are an overwhelming lure, Clyde's

sexuality is "always at the service of his fears, his petty snobbism, his calculations."[55] His is a "disposition easily and often intensely inflamed by the chemistry of sex and the formula of beauty" (Tragedy, 263), but even in physical pleasure Clyde cannot forgo the materialistic impulses driving him. Sex is usually for him just a "reflection of his ambition,"[56] with sex compounded into the American Dream. And Clyde is a victim of the compound.

Early critics made much of Jude's sexuality. Harold Child observes that "the taint of grossness"[57] is always dragging him down. Arthur Symons points out that the book is "one of the most sexual novels I have ever read."[58] Constant references to pigs symbolize the animal side of not only Arabella but Jude as well. Herbert Grimsditch asserts that the animal aspect of Jude is "always too strong for the spiritual."[59] In providing Jude with a sensuous nature Hardy is not merely recognizing that the human being is a "portion of one organism called sex,"[60] but also recognizing that life is a physiological fact and that its honest portrayal cannot ignore the sexual relationship. In one sense, Hardy emphasizes Jude's spirituality by having him struggle to achieve it despite the constant temptation of his body. Had Jude been a cold, sexless person, his struggle would have seemed of far less significance.

Just as Jude is not without a physical side, Clyde is not without some moral values. Clyde's conscience is pricked when he refuses his mother money for his seduced pregnant sister, planning instead to save in order to buy a fur coat for Hortense and thereby gain her favours.

The narrator comments that "it was shameful. He was low, really mean" (Tragedy, 135). Clyde does consider briefly the moral aspect of his behaviour: "Might he not, later, be punished for a thing like this?" (Tragedy, 135). Clyde soon dismisses that fear and persists in denying his mother's plea for some money to help his sister Esta. In the trial scene, Clyde's attorney describes him as a "moral and mental coward" and adds, "not that I am condemning you for anything that you cannot help. (After all, you didn't make yourself, did you?)" (Tragedy, 728). It is a point of view that Dreiser himself seems to endorse throughout the novel as a whole.

Jude and Clyde are, in fact, victims of the ambitions each cultivates, ambitions strangely alien to their backgrounds, yet predictable in view of their psychological constitutions. Ambition is such an integral part of both Jude and Clyde, that it is as vital for them as any primary characteristic. Their dreams are conceived in childhood, and their whole lives then revolve about these aspirations.

For each, the chief ambition is centred in a city. For Jude the city is Christminster, "city of light" and learning (Jude, 23), "the centre of the universe" (Jude, 254) and home of the university where he envisions all learning, culture, and true values to exist. His "quest for learning is to escape from a life of a grinding toil that he could not but wish to escape."[61] But his aim is not simply one of escape, for he is inexplicably "crazy for books" (Jude, 13), and his desire for learning is another manifestation of his sensitivity and idealism. His association with learning and with Christianity reinforce his basic

spirituality. That spirituality and sensitivity, shown when Jude feeds the birds forbidden grain, and when he cannot torture a pig to get bloodless meat, both create his ambition and foreshadow his eventual downfall. The lure of Christminster is thus for Jude the light and learning it represents, the idea it embodies.

Clyde's dreams also focus on a city. His goals in comparison with Jude's are materialistic; so any city will do so long as it offers material pleasure and glamour. Clyde finally concentrates his dreams on Lycurgus, because there opportunity beckons in the form of an uncle whom he imagines as "a kind of Croesus, living in ease and luxury" (Tragedy, 26). Lycurgus represents for Clyde the kind of possessions and life style he seeks. He is able to appreciate only the tangible aspect of success; thus he is strongly drawn to the city's nouveau riche in whose showy manner of existence he sees the importance of the material stressed. Lycurgus becomes an apt embodiment of his dream, an industrialized metropolis. Its gaudiness and modernity demonstrate how for Clyde the physical is inseparably bound up with his goals. Clyde, in fact, lives both figuratively and literally in the city. Ellen Moers in her Two Dreisers points out that Clyde "has no natural roots, almost no body. His world is never the natural one, always the urban and artificial."[62] Clyde's dream gives him a vigour, even an importance, he would not otherwise possess. "Even in a crippled psyche, there remain, eager and available, the capacities we associate with a life of awareness. False values stunt and deform these capacities, but in some pitiful way also express and release them."[63]

Thus Jude's strong sexuality, and Clyde's over-riding ambition become unchangeable factors burdening each. Jude will grow to curse the idealism which sees him innocently studying as he rides on a bakery cart, and Clyde will sit on death row, wondering why his desires led him to such a tragic end.

Turning from Jude's and Clyde's basic traits to see how these are modified by circumstance, we discover that both authors provide a cruel and abrasive environment for each character. This environment acts both to strengthen their desires and weaken their opportunities for achievement.

The physical settings in which the two find themselves much affect their development. Ironically, while Jude's rural atmosphere would seem devoid of the intellectual or spiritual - "'How ugly it is here!'", he cries of Marygreen (Jude, 13) - he develops in this direction, while Clyde, growing up in the religious and otherworldly environment of a Christian mission house, has opposite goals. Both go to work early at jobs wholly opposed to their temperaments. Jude progresses from being a living scarecrow to a bakery boy, both tasks disliked by a young man whom Hardy calls "a species of Dick Whittington whose spirit was touched to finer issues than a mere material gain" (Jude 64).

Even when Jude leaves his rural home of Marygreen for the city of Christminster, his environment continues to affect his life. "This disposition to a melancholy view was confirmed and increased by the age in which he lived. It was ... an age of transition. ... Along with

the disintegration of the old social and economic structure went a disintegration of ideas."[64] Jude becomes a stonemason, and is brought in touch with the life and ideas of the city. Victorian England was in the midst of a revolution of ideas, and Jude's own mind reflected this revolution. In the city he is exposed through Sue to a questioning approach to commonly-held concepts of God and morality. Sue's opinion of "'what is the use of thinking of laws and ordinances ... if they make you miserable when you know you are committing no sin?'" (Jude, 177), and her quotation from J.S.Mill, "who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation," make Jude at first feel appalled, yet gradually his outlook becomes similar (Jude, 178). Because of this new philosophy, not only Jude, but Sue, and Phillotson are set apart from their environment, and made miserable by it. When Phillotson lets Sue go to live with her lover Jude, he is interrogated by the chairman of the School Committee, asked to resign, and finally dismissed because of his conduct. But it is Jude's suffering which is more subtle and in a way more agonizing. Mill might put forth radical ideas, but social attitudes generally demanded conformity to conventions, and failure to conform results in society's disapproval and condemnation. Jude, in fact, becomes the victim of an environment where he cannot live according to his own principles, and when he attempts to do so, he has to suffer the consequences. Jude's and Sue's principles are in conflict with their environment. In another world there might be no conflict for Jude, but Jude is not in another world. He is in the one in which he finds himself. Thus while his character leads him along the path he takes, the world in which he finds himself determines the

outcome of following that path.

Clyde too is strongly affected by his environment. He parades the streets of Kansas City reluctantly as part of his parents' preaching and singing mission. Repelled and resentful on account of their reception, embarrassed because his father is called "Old Praise-the-Lord Griffiths" (Tragedy, 18), Clyde sees his parents as failures and his sole wish is to escape. He wants to be just like other boys and imagines all would be different if he had better clothes and a car.

His first contacts outside his dreary mission home strengthen his belief that outward appearance is the most important aspect of existence. Taking a job in a gaudy hotel with an Arabian Nights atmosphere, Clyde is enraptured by the tall tales of the bell-boys and the luxury around him. He sees no inconsistency in a crooked bell-captain who demands a portion of his tips. He questions nothing, willing to pay any price for his connection with the hotel.

Frederick Hoffman points out how "every event of his life is determined by its locale."[65] In the Green-Davidson Clyde almost blends into the décor. The effect of locale upon him is even stronger at a climactic moment in the novel: Roberta's murder is first suggested to him by a particular landscape and scene. Without Roberta, he accidentlly visits a desolate and lonely lake which causes him to remember a newspaper story of a drowned girl whose companion's body was never found. "He did not realize it, but at the moment his own

subconscious need was contemplating the loneliness and the usefulness at times of such a lone spot as this" (Tragedy, 494). Then, to give voice to his dark thoughts, the eerie cry of the wier-wier bird sounds, a birdcry unlike any he has ever heard (Tragedy, 494-495). Clyde has not sought a murder scene; it is almost thrust upon him. His return with Roberta to these lakes is only an enactment of what the environment had suggested on the previous visit.

In view of the undeniable effect of their environment upon both heroes, it is striking how often this environment is changed for each. Jude consciously moves to five main localities, seeking in each the spiritual fulfilment he has been denied elsewhere. His intellectual quest, termed by Hardy a "form of the modern vice of unrest" (Jude, 69), takes him along many spiritual as well as physical avenues. Each of the six parts of the novel, except for the last, begins on a note of hope as Jude changes residences. Each ends, however, with the revelation that this latest hope is also unattainable. In the last part, part six, Jude returns to the scene of his first defeat and finds his last disappointment there. As Jude migrates, his outlook also undergoes changes. He is initially a simple idealist accepting the teachings of Christianity and society as exact replicas of an eternal verity. When he encounters Sue, who has freer ideas, Jude is at first shocked and frightened. Her recompilation of the Bible, for instance, shocks him. Gradually, however, he realizes the shading of true morality and acts out what Sue can only voice. As he becomes freer, she, unable to stand derision and the loss of her children, reverts to the traditional philosophical position Jude first held, and the two actually exchange

intellectual positions.

Clyde likewise changes his environment several times. But he moves only by physical accident rather than, like Jude, through the effort to find a less cramping environment. He leaves his home town of Kansas City because of the car accident involving the death of a child; he leaves Chicago because he by chance has encountered his uncle; he leaves Lycurgus to take Roberta to the lake because she has become pregnant; and he leaves life because Roberta was - in the final analysis - accidentally drowned. Even though his home changes, his basic code remains the same. Each of the three books of the novel opens in a new locality with a new promise and ends with defeat. For Clyde the promise and the defeat always remain the same: the achievement of wealth and success on the one hand, their loss on the other.

Environment includes not only setting, but chance and circumstance as well. Many of Jude's and Clyde's difficulties arise from a particular combination of circumstances. Circumstance appears in five forms for Jude: chance and coincidence, nature, time, woman, and convention.[66] The forms are similar for Clyde. Generally for each, circumstance is malignant: "But nobody did come because nobody does," we read when Jude needs help in deciphering his grammar (Jude, 27). If somebody had come, i.e., the quack physician, his help would have been bogus. Dreiser spells out a similar rule for Clyde when he says that Clyde's situation can lead only to disaster "unless chance in some form should aid. And chance did not aid" (Tragedy, 455).

Various coincidences also affect the lives of both men. Jude's life is not free from some adverse coincidences. For example, Sue's expulsion from the training college is the result of a train they missed. Sue's marriage to Phillotson is the outgrowth of the schoolmaster's chance relocation near Christminster and Jude's bad luck in introducing the pair. Yet despite the element of coincidence, Jude makes an attempt, futile as it might be, to control his life. He meets Arabella by chance, yet his intimacy with her develops not by chance but only after he has left her and decided to keep his word in meeting her again. He first sees Sue by chance, but he has fallen in love with her photograph before they meet. But Jude's effort to make something of chance, trying consciously to control his opportunity, are shown to be as useless as is Clyde's tendency simply to float unthinkingly with what chance provides.

The most telling coincidence for Clyde, which "was destined to bring about a chain of events which none of them could possibly have foreseen" (Tragedy, 331), is his chance re-encounter with Sondra and her mistaken belief that he is his wealthy cousin, Gilbert. Their whole relationship, however, stems from this occurrence.

Jude's basic makeup inevitably determined his decisions in crucial and critical times, whereas Clyde's basic makeup meant that he made few real decisions. Jude's temperament thus is almost in every case at work, whereas Clyde almost always drifts with events rather than trying to control them.

Defining first the critical points in the life of Jude we find out that his infatuation with Christminster is interrupted by his meeting with the callous Arabella and his subsequent and disastrous marriage to her. Following the failure of this matrimonial union Jude takes the road to Christminster; there he receives the letter advising him to abandon his efforts to become a scholar; the result is his decision to enter the ministry instead. His religious adoration of Sue, his attempt to release her from the "gin" of her marriage to Phillotson and the "kiss" are important factors in his rejection of conventional religion. His life with Sue, the suicide-murder of their children, Sue's return to Phillotson, and his remarriage, create his motive to give up the struggle and put an end to his life. In every case Jude seems to make a decision.

We have already observed that Jude's sexuality involves him with Arabella, but his tendency to put mind over matter and his sense of honour and duty make him marry her: "He kept up a factitious belief in her. His idea of her was the thing of most consequence, not Arabella herself, he sometimes said laconically" (Jude, 48). He knows Arabella will stifle his dreams about "books, and degrees, and impossible fellowships" (Jude, 48), but Jude cannot sacrifice one ideal for another. And just because of his innocence, he is often called a "simple fool" (Jude, 48). However, after ten years of serious studies, his hopes of entering the "gown life" of Christminster are finally crushed when he receives the college master's letter advising him to remain in his "own sphere" as a stonemason (Jude, 95). The outright

rejection of his hopes does not wound Jude as deeply as "the awakening to a sense of his limitations" (Jude, 94), and the realization that, on the world's terms, he is "unequipped, poor, and unforeseeing" (Jude, 94). Following this defeat, Jude takes an alcoholic plunge in his attempt to escape his mental anguish, but as a "strong-brained" fellow (Jude, 98), strong liquor cannot make him forget, and, significantly, even in an alcoholic stupor, he recites the Creed in Latin, never escaping his intellectual endowment (Jude, 99). That night, in his stress and sorrow he seeks Sue, but at dawn when he strikes out into the Wessex countryside, and returns to his aunt's house at Alfredston, he meets the curate and decides to aim his ambition at the ministry rather than at the scholarly life which now seems impossible.

After reaching this decision to enter the ministry, Jude's honesty compels him to admit to himself that his hopes of becoming a clergyman had been less than completely spiritual: "The old fancy which had led on to the culminating vision of the bishopric had not been an ethical or theological enthusiasm at all, but a mundane ambition masquerading in a surplice" (Jude, 103). Nevertheless, he reasons:

> But to enter the Church in such an unscholarly way that he could not in any probability rise to a higher grade through all his career than that of the humble curate wearing his life out in an obscure village or city slum - that might have a touch of goodness and greatness in it; that might be true religion, and a purgatorial course worthy of being followed by a remorseful man (Jude, 103).

It is Jude's honesty, however, that later causes him to abandon

all thoughts of the clergy. He kisses Sue, a "turning-point" in his career, and decides that as long as he loves another man's wife he cannot "pursue the idea of becoming the soldier and servant of a religion in which sexual love was regarded as at its best, a frailty, and at its worst damnation" (Jude, 172). Jude's true spirituality prevents him living a sham. Although at this moment he has not yet questioned whether the church's rulings are justified, he only knows that if he cannot give himself fully, he will withhold himself. He is acute enough to see that the law made of him a sinner where he had no intention of sinning, yet he was not strong enough to conquer the needs that led him to offend against it.

When he reflects that his aspirations regarding scholarship and apostleship had both been checked by women he does not realize that it is not women but his ideas about them that cause his downfall. His relationships with Arabella and Sue were equally disastrous for his development[67] because he sees neither of them as she really is - and deals with both on the basis of incorrect suppositions.

As far as Jude's final rejection of Christianity and social convention is concerned, no rejection of the spiritual is involved. He abandons not the ethics of true Christianity, but the fallacious version of the church glorified by a hypocritical society. The narrator is obviously against many of the hypocritical social conventions that are antiquated and inhumane. Throughout the novel the narrator makes various sarcastic remarks about the hollow values of people who have society's and regligion's stamp of approval. For example, he suggests

the sham religious charity some people manifest by placing his comment that Farmer Troutham shows "love for God and man" (Jude, 15) by donating to the church in the context of the same passage that describes the farmer's conventional and shallow "goodness". In addition, the narrator sees the foolishness of the marriage laws (Jude, 80) and how society sanctions the unsuitable marriage of Jude and Arabella, Sue and Phillotson, and at the same time punishes mercilessly Jude and Sue for what is at least a more honest and satisfying relationship. The narrator also points out that the Training School's matron is only concerned about bad publicity and does not care if Sue is dead (Jude, 114). Jude finds it difficult to accept what he does not believe; and he cannot believe what he cannot intellectualy reason out as logical and good. When Sue gives in to social convention and deserts Jude for another man, Jude does not change his mental outlook. Sue's cruel desertion merely crushes Jude's last desire to continue the struggle. When he goes out into the rain to weaken himself enough to die, he does so with a conscious plan. Surprisingly, it is one of the few plans of his life that works.

Clyde, in comparison with Jude, did encounter critical points in his short career, but he could hardly make a decision. These difficult situations could be identified as Esta's pregnancy, followed shortly afterwards by the Kansas city accident, and Clyde's escape to Chicago where he meets his uncle Samuel Griffiths in the Chicago League Club. In Lycurgus, Clyde becomes involved with Roberta. Roberta's pregnancy and his dream of success with Sondra put Clyde in the most critical

dilemma he has ever known. After Roberta's death comes Clyde's trial, his conversion and death. Terrible as some of them are, these events have no meaning to Clyde except as they stand in the way of his material desires.

The fact of Esta's pregnancy, for example, can be seen as prefiguring the major movement of the novel which is set in train by Roberta's pregnancy. In the early episode involving his sister all that is threatened is Clyde's selfish dreams of spending all his newly acquired money on himself; in Roberta's case it is a whole new life of material and social success that is threatened. Ironically, it is a lack of money that prevents Clyde from extricating himself from the Roberta problem: the doctor who refuses to help Roberta had helped other wealthy girls in a similar situation.

Clyde makes no decision about Roberta's predicament. His efforts are aimed at delay in the hope that a way out will miraculously unfold, for in"this crisis he was as interesting an illustration of the enormous handicaps imposed by ignorance, youth, poverty and fear as one could have found" (Tragedy, 418). His dilly-dallying finally drives Roberta to desperation, and she forces the issue. She writes that unless she hears from him immediately, "the world will know how you have treated me" (Tragedy, 506). Clyde is as usual mesmerized by the situation, and "with this in his hands, he was finally all but numbed by the fact that now decidedly he must act" (Tragedy, 507).

His plan to murder Roberta comes from a newspaper clipping. Even

as he attempts to formulate an outline for his scheme, his own mind seems to desert him and some "Giant Efrit" takes over, a voice from nowhere directing his efforts:

> And the moment which he or something had planned for him, and which was now to decide his fate at hand! ... It could be done - it could be done - swiftly and simply, were he now of the mind and heart, or lack of it - with him swimming swiftly away thereafter to freedom - to success - of course - to Sondra and happiness - a new and greater and sweeter life than any he had ever known (Tragedy, 529-530).

- that is what the voice tells him.

At the point of action, Clyde hesitates and takes no overt decision, letting the fates once again take over. Roberta comes toward him in the boat. As he rises to stop her, he unintentionally strikes her with the camera in his hand. Then "rising and reaching half to assist or recapture her and half to apologize for the unintended blow," he capsizes the boat (Tragedy, 531). Up to that point, he still "had not quite made up his mind as to whether he would be able to go through with it or not" (Tragedy, 512). As Roberta is drowning, the voice instructs him to ignore her pleas for help. He makes perhaps his only decision and lets her drown, a moral but not a legal offence. Even after the drowning, "the thought that, after all, he had not really killed her" comes to him (Tragedy, 532), an illustration once again of his materialistic orientation. He cannot accept guilt since he did not strike a death blow. His idea of evil is not abstract enough to make him feel at fault unless he physically precipitates an event. Roberta's

death shows that Clyde is not master of his fate and can only choose evil, as well as good, under particular circumstances. The whole episode is strongly reminiscent of Hurstwood's "theft" of the dollar bills in Sister Carrie: In both cases it is fate or chance that seems to determine the event; the individual is more a victim than master of the circumstances in which he finds himself.

Clyde's conversion is also important. When the strangely attractive Reverend Duncan McMillan visits Clyde in prison offering him comfort through religion, Clyde ponders whether he should accept the peace being promised. He asks himself, "was he going to turn to religion now, solely because he was in difficulties and frightened like these others? He hoped not" (Tragedy, 840). It is not religion, however, an abstraction after all, to which Clyde succumbs. It is McMillan. As usual Clyde relates only to the visible, "the appealing Rev.Duncan McMillan. His mild, serene eyes. His sweet voice. His faith" (Tragedy, 842). Clyde eventually yields not to any idea of a God, but to the minister, "anxious to retain his interest and visits. ... It was the force and the earnestness of the Rev.McMillan operating upon him " (Tragedy, 844). Even Clyde's conversion is a fake. He refuses to forego a belief that somehow he is "not as guilty as they all seemed to think" (Tragedy, 857). When he learns that he is to die and tells his mother "'God has heard my prayers'", he adds to himself "'Had He?'" (Tragedy, 869).

Clyde is condemned to death because of the material evidence against him : his straw hat, his camera, Roberta's letter to her mother

found in her coat pocket, and her other letters to Clyde found in his room which brought the judge and the jury to tears. His attempt to save himself by claiming a fake "change of heart" about Roberta also fails (Tragedy, 851). Clyde undergoes a symbolic death prior to his actual one. Figuratively, just as Jude dies spiritually as soon as Sue deserts him, Clyde is dead as soon as Roberta drowns.

Both Jude and Clyde suffered alienation and rejection from their societies. We have already observed in the previous chapter (IV), how Jude's alienation and suffering begin early in life. Alienation from society is, in both instances, indicated by the use of wall symbols as striking metaphors for loneliness. In Christminster, as Jude haunts the walkways of the college he muses, "only a wall divided him from those happy young contemporaries of his ... only a wall - but what a wall!" (Jude, 70). The wall represents all the social, economic, and class barriers to the world of learning. It embodies Jude's failure and serves as mocking reminder of his unrealistic and false hopes. The closed doors of the walled, revered institutions remain silent rebuffs of his efforts. Shortly before his death, Jude admits : "'I am an outsider to the end of my days!'" (Jude, 259). And, cruelly enough, Jude dies outside the walls of Christminster still looking in.

The tall walls keeping Clyde in his place are not only symbolic impediments to his material success but are actual barricades as well. "The tall walls of the commercial heart of an American city ... such walls as in time may linger as a mere fable" (Tragedy, 15) trap Clyde, and these walls are actually buildings with night watchmen and locked

doors. In Lycurgus Clyde strolls longingly by the tall walls of the houses of Wykeagy Avenue. The need for access, to cease being outside gazing in, haunts Clyde, and eventually leads to his involvement in a murder. However, he dies outside the tall buildings of the rich people foreign to their "cars and crowds" (Tragedy, 18).

Jude's and Clyde's alienation comes from the fact that both have felt no kind of unity with their surrounding environment and their own kind. In Hardy's and Dreiser's novels, the happiest people are those most in harmony with their environment, a condition Jude and Clyde obviously lack. Because of his alienation from his fellow man, Jude "persistently idealized the 'real' world of men and attempted vainly to live in the ghostly world he had created, which was visible and real only to him."[68] Therefore, "happiness was unattainable for Jude because he was perpetually confronted with the sordid, earthly world of men, opposed as it was to his glorious ideal, the realm of ghosts."[69] As long as his ideals of Christminster and Sue were untarnished, he attempted to live in the real world, but when these concepts were no longer comforting to him he wished to die. "With the vanishing of his most precious ghosts, his will to live disintegrated, for he could not exist in the world of men."[70]

Without the world of men, Clyde, however had nothing. The world rejects Clyde, but he was never hostile to the society which did not accept him. His only aim was to become part of Lycurgus's upper crust, and he saw nothing unpleasant about its organization except his

exclusion. Without his reverence and awe for the material world, Clyde is empty. He is defined not as an individual but through his relationships to institutions - the hotel, factory and society. Thus in Dreiser's world, man progressed in proportion to his harmony with society and nature. Clyde could not fit into society nor rise superior to it, so he remained adrift in the metropolis.

The society repudiating Clyde welcomed persons like him who achieved material plenty, but scorned them when they did not. Gilbert Griffiths, Clyde's cousin, is as amoral and even more self-centred than Clyde, and Clyde is as capable as Gilbert. But because of his wealth, Gilbert is part of the world which disdains Clyde. The attorney representing Clyde had once been in a similar situation; but his family had the money to extricate the attorney from the situation; so he could marry the girl of his choice. Clyde's society seems similar to that of Cowperwood with the motto "I satisfy myself", and the end justifying the means - if the means work.

Conventional religion also alienates Jude and Clyde. Both are intimately involved with religion. The hypocrisy of much Christianity is sharply etched for Jude on several occasions. He and Sue are banished from carving the Ten Commandments on a church wall because they are not married. When the farmer thrashes Jude for letting the birds feed, the sound of the beating echoes from the new church tower for which the farmer had contributed money to "testify his love for God and man" (Jude, 15). Jude is doubly tormented by Christianity, which fails him not only as a philosophy, but also causes the loss of Sue. When

Jude declines Arabella's offer to fetch Sue to his death-bed: "'I don't wish to see her again. ... She has chosen her course. Let her go!'" (Jude, 317), it is suggested that he is not rejecting Sue but Christianity.[71]

Clyde is also repelled by Christianity because he sees in it not only the poverty of his parents, but a barren way of life, like that of his mother whose faith is never answered, and whose asceticism is quite the opposite of the material pleasures he longs for. Clyde is deeply embarrassed when some boys in the neighbourhood taunt him by calling: "Here comes old praise-the-Lord Griffiths", or "Hey, you're the fellow whose sister plays the organ. Is there anything else she can play?" (Tragedy, 18). What Clyde finds unacceptable is the dreary mission life led by his parents in order to save a few drunks and derelicts in the face of an incredulous world. They "preach ... of God's love for man and of man's ability to make the spirit of God's love operative in his life. Yet Clyde at home is alone and loveless."[72] Steeped as he is in religion through the stringent evangelistic activities of his family, Clyde finds that religion fails him in all cases. Religion also fails his mother when she tries to raise money in order to finance his legal defence. Local ministers, made a little uneasy by her intensity, deny her their halls for lectures. These and other instances indicate why Clyde, like Jude is alienated from religion.

The degree to which both Hardy and Dreiser are unsympathetic to a religious understanding of human existence is suggested by their

reluctance to blame their protagonists for the actions in which they become involved. The villain in both cases is not only a hostile universe but an indifferent society. In Jude the Obscure, Hardy intermingles the evils of society and its conventions with the evils of the universe. Running throughout Hardy's novel are references to the cruelty of Nature and the "First Cause". From early childhood, Jude feels that "Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for" (Jude, 17). As he grows to manhood, "the inexorable laws of nature remain what they are" (Jude, 112). Sue does not blame herself so much as she blames "'the universe ... things in general, because they are so horrid and cruel'" (Jude, 176). She exclaims, "'O why should Nature's law be mutual butchery!'" (Jude, 244). Phillotson, too, asserts that "'cruelty is the law pervading all nature and society; and we can't get out of it if we would!'" (Jude, 252). To Sue "'all is trouble, adversity and suffering!'" (Jude, 263) because it is "'Nature's law and raison d'être that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us ...'" (Jude, 268). In such a universe says Sue, "it seems such a terribly tragic thing to bring beings into the world" (Jude, 247) because "'they seem to see all its terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them'". In the words of the doctor who certifies that Sue's children are dead, the world is blighted with "'the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live'" (Jude, 266). Fate, ultimately, as Sue points out to Jude "'has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word'!" (Jude, 268). The cruelties inherent in nature are repeated in human institutions. As Roy Huss points out "the bungling job of creation does not even end with the

defects produced in man, for man himself is a creator. Society ... is man's own particular handiwork, and in constructing it he has unfortunately tinged it with the imperfections of his own nature."[73] For Hardy the tragedy of the individual is produced "by an opposing environment either of things inherent in the universe, or of human institutions."[74]

In Jude the Obscure, society as an embodiment of what humanity has achieved thus far, is full of archaic and irrelevant attitudes that lead to inhumane and shortsighted beliefs and behaviour. Thus what could be a singular instance of man's creative potential becomes, in terms of the novel, an instance of his limited development.

For the purposes of Jude the Obscure, the failures of society are primarily embodied in the institution of marriage and in the educational problems of the lower class. Admittedly, the picture drawn of Victorian marriage is a very harsh and extreme one. And the picture of Jude's struggle is as bleak as it can be. But the study of the marriage question is a way of portraying the essential character of Victorian society, and what ultimately comes across is a picture of a society that denies the reality of human nature in all its complexity, and insists on adherence to codes of behaviour that deny the rights and needs of individuals.

Since man is very much a prisoner of his physical urges, social behavioural codes should take into consideration man's carnal nature and keep a sense of proportion in their evaluations of actions of a sexual

nature. As Jude the Obscure demonstrates, society has failed to develop such an attitude and is, therefore, responsible for the persecution and even destruction of relatively well-intentioned people who succumb, in a moment of weakness, to what the novel suggests is a natural "instinct". Society sanctions the unsuitable marriage of Jude and Arabella, while it punishes Jude and Sue for what is at least a more honest and satisfying relationship.

Instances of criticism of the marital state abound in the text, and criticism of marriage itself as more of a legal contract than an elevating relationship based as much on spiritual and intellectual grounds as on physical ones, appears over and over again (cf.pp.134, 154, 155, 167, 224, 227) throughout the novel.

The genuine cruelty of society's standards comes largely from the fact that society has failed to allow for any individual development within its rigid system. Sue articulates the frustration felt by such a denial of her individual inclinations: "'I have been thinking ... that the social moulds civilization fits us into have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real star-patterns'" (Jude, 163). The extension of this argument is that laws should be made flexible enough to allow for some aberrations, especially in such a personal and unpredictable relationship as that existing between man and woman: Sue articulates this need in a rather impractical suggestion: "'Domestic laws should be made according to temperaments, which should be classified. If people are at all peculiar in character they have to suffer from the very rules that produce

comfort in others!'" (Jude, 177).

As the increasing persecution of Jude and Sue indicates, society can be vicious in its punishment of those who do not follow its manners and mores. The great power of society's sanctions is emphasized by the fact that even such basically well-intentioned people as Jude, Sue, and Phillotson can be driven to do mean and cruel acts because of societal pressures: "'I can't bear that they, and everybody, should think people wicked because they may have chosen to live their own way! It is really these opinions that make the best intentioned people reckless, and actually become immoral!'" (Jude, 240).

An example of society's perversion of basically good instincts is the insinuation at the end of the novel that society has conquered and that Phillotson will not be so tolerant in his treatment of Sue any more: he speaks of "'misplaced kindness'" and the need for "'a little judicious severity'" (Jude, 290) in his future treatment of Sue. Sue's spirit is finally brought around to socially accepted behaviour, and she denies all that she has been arguing for in the form of individual expression, succumbing instead to the immense social pressures upon her.

Religion, in this context, might be seen as the agency within society for the promotion of more humane social attitudes. But religion in the novel comes under severe criticism as society's conspirator against human nature rather than as an advocate for progressive and

humane attitudes. The harsh reality of society's judgment against Jude and Sue emerges when Jude is offered the job of restoring the lettering of the Ten Commandments in a small church near Aldbrickham; Sue accompanies him even though she is noticeably pregnant. Believing they will be alone in the church, Jude and Sue underestimate the keenness of humanity's disapproving eyes. Sue is recognized by the cleaning-woman, who passes her information on to others. The appearance of Father Time on the scene only worsens matters. Soon two ladies of the congregation are making remarks about Sue's doubtful marital status, and the churchwarden is telling a weirdly humorous anecdote. It is clear that these people have already condemned Jude and Sue as immoral; accordingly, they are soon dismissed from their work by the contractor because of complaints from the congregation.

The incident demonstrates how pitifully ill-prepared the pair are to deal with this kind of unjust treatment. Jude does not expect anyone to intrude into such a secluded place; Sue does not anticipate that her pregnancy will be noticed - or, if it should be, that any objection is likely to be raised against her assisting Jude in painting the Ten Commandments.

Perhaps the most scathing picture of religion occurs in the juxtaposition of the picture of Jude and Sue as they grieve for their dead children against the background of "'two clergymen of different views, arguing about the eastward position'" (Jude, 267). As Jude exclaims, "'Good God - the eastward position, and all creation groaning!'" (Jude, 267).

The educational system does not fare much better than society and religion. The fact that someone as industrious and worthy as Jude is treated with so much indifference by the educational world reveals an essential limitation within the system itself and its bias towards the privileged classes. So long as the educational system is so exclusive, it denies its potential and its real reason for existing.

Thus, the picture of the social, religious and intellectual development of humanity which emerges in the novel is one that emphasizes human limitation and intolerance; society denies the complexity of human nature instead of trying to come to grips with it. The persecutions and unhappiness, Jude, Sue and Phillotson undergo at the hands of this insensitive and arbitrary set of social and religious values are far out of proportion to the flaws these characters admit to. Society, then, as a collective embodiment of human possibility, fails to foster development of the full potential of humanity. Society could provide a stable and nurturing environment in which human potential could be maximized and human limitations minimized. Such is what society could be: the novel shows it as it is.

Dreiser too is concerned with the whole scheme of things. But his less powerful theme - as is appropriate in a materialistically-orientated novel - is that the external controlling force is never God, but rather chance or some evolutionary social drive. Dreiser, like Hardy, seems to doubt the existence of any form of God. Instead, he chooses to deal directly with the physical world. However, he

imparts the same mystic quality to this world in his tragedy that Hardy does to the universe in Jude the Obscure.

Early in his boyhood Clyde reveals the limitation of his personality by associating himself with a showy and superficial world. As his parents' drab and dreary mission life fails to make him feel the value of the spiritual side of life and prevents him from living in harmony with his natural surrounding, the Green-Davidson hotel becomes his ideal. Living there closer to a society which puts great value on the American Dream of success, Clyde becomes astonished by the glittering atmosphere around him that whets his desires and stimulates his materialistic ambitions. Instead of working to help his needy family, Clyde saves his money to satisfy his desires and gratify his sensual nature. The Green-Davidson hotel thus has a negative influence on Clyde's mind to the extent that it conditions his expectations of life.

Dreiser condemns the stultifying ways of society, be they religious, materialistic or conventional. The ideal for Dreiser is always a life not bound by society but one in which the individual is supreme. Materialism has, for all his characters, from Carrie to Jennie, from Cowperwood to Witla, proved ultimately barren. Dreiser always prefers at least to preach against a society that worships the false god of Mammon and disposes the individual toward destructive materialism. Yet over and over again it is apparent that Dreiser himself is complicit with his protagonists' materialist desires. In

An American Tragedy, Dreiser may deplore the American Dream of material success and the materialistic and social conditions that stunt the individual and blight his spiritual growth. In the novel, that dream may have propelled Clyde toward a route that leads finally to his destruction. Yet the force and power of the novel lie largely in the sympathetic understanding Dreiser brings to the creation of Clyde's character. Dreiser may in the end state that what he wants the individual to do is to repudiate a narrow materialism and embrace a wider sense of life and life's potential as outlined by the characters of his earlier novels such as Bob Ames and Jennie Gerhardt. Clyde, however, never even approaches such a wider understanding. What destroys him, though, is less the wrongness of his goals, however narrow in one sense they may be, than a crucial weakness of character that prevents him from pursuing his aims with the ruthlessness of a Cowperwood. The true tragedy of An American Tragedy is perhaps the fact that moral conscience and the drive for social betterment prove incompatible.

Both books also include the theme of a "tragedy of unfulfilled aims", a tragedy linked inevitably to the author's views of society as a damaging factor. Hardy describes his book as "a short story of a young man 'who could not go to Oxford' - His struggles and ultimate failure."[75] An American Tragedy is a novel of the "unfulfilled promise"[76] of a young man who could not make his version of the American Dream come true.

The contrasts within each book point up this non-fulfilment. In

Jude the Obscure, "the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid real life he was fated to lead"[77] is revealed. "Of course the book is all contrasts,"[78] Hardy also said. The contrasts are not only within Jude, the saint versus the sinner, but also in society.

What he is told to believe at home and what he sees all around him establish the contrasts for Clyde. He is informed that the meek shall inherit the earth, yet he sees that it is not the timid who enjoy the profits. He is told to work hard, yet he notices those who endlessly toil and endlessly fail. Clyde always attempts to reconcile the contrasts and he cannot. "Life is so casual, and luck comes to many who sleep and flies from those who try" (Tragedy, 442), Dreiser said, and Clyde makes the same observation.

Even the cities where the two are located only enlarge the gap between hope and fulfilment. Christminster is the symbol of Jude's aspirations, but as Huss observes, "although the educational opportunities which tantalize Jude and lead him to Christminster seem to be more worth while than Eustacia's vision of the glamour of Parisian life, they prove to be just as false and perhaps even more of an illusion."[79]

Similarly, Lycurgus's promise of the American Dream is also false. Clyde's world is also a tragic one because in Whipple's words, "it is futile and wasteful, because all people have aspirations and

possibilities which cannot be fulfilled in it."[80] Indeed many critics have commented on this aspect of both books. Walter Allen, for example, points out that An American Tragedy is a novel of "unfulfilled promise"; likewise, A.Alvarez indicates that the tragedy in Jude the Obscure "is not one of missed chances but of missed fulfillment, of frustration."[81]

In his disappointment, Jude refers to the "'hell of conscious failure'," both in ambition and in love (Jude, 101). The key word is "conscious", for most men fail without admitting or understanding the meaning of failure, or they do not fail because they attempt nothing. Clyde's failure in comparison with Jude's is less verbalized, but he recalls that he had "longed for so much ... and he had had so little. Things - just things - had seemed very important to him -" (Tragedy, 865).

Thus far each hero is rebuffed, rejected, refused and confused by varying aspects of a hostile universe and an indifferent society. While Jude is always revealed in spiritual terms: his worthy ideals and elevated aspirations frustrated by social organizations and conventions, Clyde is often revealed in material terms - his alienation is one from the world of wealthy and well-to-do people. While Hardy condemns his society for its failure to realize the promise of a better spiritual and academic atmosphere for poor people such as Jude, Dreiser criticizes his society for its false promise of the American Dream.

In developing their characters as they did, however, Hardy and Dreiser attempted to reveal some hope for the future. The ending of

each novel does indeed hold out hope for future improvement. Each hero comes full circle in a way at once disheartening and slightly optimistic. The full circle and new beginning are expressed indirectly in Jude the Obscure. In reviewing his failure to accomplish what he set out to do, Jude sees that he has tried to speed up the evolutionary progress: "'It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one'" (Jude, 257). The scholarship programme to help students like Jude is tangible proof that society is, to however small a degree, beginning to provide expanded opportunities of development for its members, a sign of a more humane and positive attitude.

In the first chapter of An American Tragedy, the scene is "dusk - of a summer night" (Tragedy, 15), and Clyde, a small child, is dragged reluctantly to sing and preach with his family on the streets. At the end, Clyde is dead, but the same family gathers in a re-enactment of the scene; again it is "dusk, of a summer night" (Tragedy, 871), and again a small boy who yearns to be elsewhere is part of the scene. The new child is Esta's illegitimate son, Russell, and Clyde's tragic life seems to be beginning all over again. Yet there is a hint of a better future for this new "Clyde". Mrs.Griffiths tells herself that she must be more kind, more liberal with this child and "not restrain him too much, as maybe, maybe, she had -" done with Clyde (Tragedy, 874). She thinks of her new outlook as something "for his {Clyde's} sake;" so perhaps Clyde's life and death were not wholly without meaning. Dreiser uses as usual materialistic terms. The symbol of Mrs.Griffiths's new understanding is the dime for an ice-cream cone she gives Russell.

To sum up, then, each hero began life handicapped by his background and a personality at odds with itself. And each was defeated by sexuality, poverty, and an ambition which logically should have been abandoned. While Jude fought his battles on the ground of idealism, Clyde waged his war on the front of economic deprivation. Nevertheless, neither was, in the viewpoint of his author, to blame for his tragedy. Jude's unfulfilled aspirations halted his happiness just as Clyde's selfishness hindered his success. Circumstance dealt as indifferently with a man who sought intellectual development as with one who longed for the touch of Midas. While Jude always agonizes over the demands of honour and duty when he faces a crisis, Clyde simply lets the crisis determine its own outcome or runs away from the problem. However, both heroes find their goals equally frustrated. Both change a harsh environment for an apparently more sympathetic one, but the result is defeat in each case, for conditions are inherent not in certain locales but in society and the universe itself. From the point of view of both authors, society and nature present insuperable barriers to both spiritual and materialistic fulfilment.

When Jude finally dies, he dies with dignity. He cannot avoid his fate, but he has taken control of it. Dying thus we pity Jude, for his suffering is great, greater than any human being can bear. The intensity and significance of his suffering is suggested by references to Jude as a martyr or Christ figure. Early in the novel, Jude sought to pattern his life after Christ's by focusing on a life of service (Jude, 104). There are also many references to Job that elevate our sense of Jude's monumental suffering. Jude seems to be aware of this

parallel between his situation and Job's and even dies muttering Job's words (Jude, 320).

On his death, Jude denounces with Job the very birth which has led to so much suffering and so little joy: "'Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived. ... Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?'" (Jude, 320). This recognition of the waste of the hero's life may be seen as the kind of anagnorisis that frequently occurs at the end of a Greek or Elizabethan tragedy. Hardy's heroes understanding and acquiescence in the rightness of their destinies make them more akin to Shakespeare's heroes than Dreiser's.

Jude's dying words may be bitterly sincere, but their association with Job undoubtedly lends dignity to his death scene. The world has done its best to destroy Jude's dreams, his idealism, and his integrity. Unlike Job, he ultimately gains nothing. Nevertheless, Jude has gained an increased awareness of himself, and of the nature of reality, which prevents his life from being meaningless.

The parallels between Jude and the long-suffering figures of the Bible can thus be interpreted as adding dignity and expanded significance to his character. His consciousness of these parallels, and his striving to emulate Christ may be seen as manifestations of his lofty ambition to make something significant of his life. As a modern man, Jude is not of the magnitude of a Christ or a Job; but in the

reduced dimensions of the modern world Jude lives in, where man is relegated to a small role only, Jude certainly cannot be faulted for failing to aim high. Thus the novel makes a considerable effort to develop classical and biblical levels of imagery. These levels of references not only elevate the stature of Jude but give his story a significance far beyond what it might otherwise be seen to have. This is especially true of the Christ, Job, and martyr images used in conjunction with Jude.

Enhancing the Christ parallel, and enlarging Jude's significance, is the fact that Jude represents not just the case of one naive person striving to achieve something. Rather, Jude, in a sense, reflects a major future movement within society whereby educational opportunities will be made more readily available to those from the lower classes who will benefit from them. (Jude, 56 "every working- man being of that taste {reading with an eye to self-education} now"). In a sense, then, Jude is a kind of scapegoat sacrificed for the present shortcomings of his society. Certainly, Jude is conscious of himself as a martyr, and tells Arabella: "'I am giving my body to be burned!'" (Jude, 298). Ironically, he hears that plans are afoot to allow more disadvantaged youths to get a university education but "'it is too late, too late for me! Ah - and for how many worthier ones before me!'" (Jude, 317). Again, he is seen - and sees himself - as representing more than an individual's plight.

Jude's enlarged significance is also suggested by the fact that humanity's ancient battle between the flesh and the spirit is embodied

in Jude's dual attraction to the physical allure of Arabella, and the spiritual elevation of Sue's presence. This ancient conflict is further delineated by two contrasting sets of historical images: The classical and sensual versus the biblical and more spiritual. Thus, these two levels of imagery, because of their historical universality, sustain the idea that Jude's struggle is one which has engaged humanity throughout the centuries.

Many of Jude's efforts are directed at transcending the limitations that are inevitably part of having a physical presence. This takes two forms. In his earlier phases, Jude, like, Eustacia and Tess, is quite the dreamer and lives in a romantic world that makes his drab, confined world tolerable: "his dreams were as gigantic as his surroundings were small" (Jude, 20). As he becomes "so romantically attached to Christminster," he watches over her in a reverie that allows him to exist imaginatively on a plane above the physical: "He had become entirely lost to his bodily situation during this mental leap ..." (Jude, 21). Such incidents are mentioned several times throughout the novel: as children, Jude and Sue used "'to see things in the air'" (Jude, 91); Jude says he is "'spectre-seeing always'" (Jude, 121); Jude and Sue take on the appearance of ghosts and "proceeded through the fog like the Acherontic shades" (Jude, 285); Jude sees ghosts upon his arrival in Chrisminster and sees them and hears them in his last months of life: "'I see ... those spirits of the dead again, on this my last walk, that I saw when I first walked here! ... I seem to see them, and almost hear them rustling'" (Jude, 311).

The extent and intensity of Jude's suffering and anguish make his desire for some transcendent peace understandable. His only way of escaping the physical is in death. Jude finds his ultimate release in death which allows him to transcend the physical and temporal that he comes more and more to associate with frustration and suffering, and he accomplishes this courageously. His death is thus not to be seen as a total defeat. Jude has long expressed a desire for peace and freedom from the pains of the world, and he fulfills that desire in death.

Also, Jude's attitude toward death allows him to assume that death is not final, and that part of him will go to a freer, more satisfying state than his physical form will allow. He imagines himself after death as finally having achieved acceptance in Christminster, and tells the uncomprehending Arabella: "'When I am dead, you'll see my spirit flitting up and down here among these {of Raleigh, Wycliffe, Harvey, and other greats whose ideas permeate Christminster}'" (Jude, 312).

Furthermore, despite all that happens, Jude never loses his compassion for others, both human and non-human. From his decision to let the rooks have some seed and his speedy dispatch of the injured rabbit, to his admirable forgiveness of Arabella who, he knows, tricked him into marrying and re-marrying her, Jude remains a person of great integrity. The action of the novel bears out the truth of Jude's statement: "'I have never behaved dishonourably to a woman or to any living thing. I am not a man who wants to save himself at the expense of the weaker among us!'" (Jude, 303). With the exception of Jude's

blackmail of Sue into having a sexual relationship with him, perhaps, Jude's character is a better testimonial to human possibility than anything else in the novel.

We know that in his early life Jude is subjected to a number of influences and circumstances which seem to shape his future almost irrevocably. Without repeating in detail the discussion of these circumstances and events, we may mention that he is an orphan, that he comes from a family in which marriages end tragically, that his aunt impresses upon him the idea that his existence is "unnecessary", and that the greatest irony of the novel is that it is precisely Jude's virtues that make him vulnerable to many difficulties. His kindness, for instance, to the rooks brings a beating and dismissal from his job. This traumatic experience with the rooks and Farmer Troutham teaches Jude the cruelty of "Nature's logic" (Jude, 17), and the illogical nature of creation wherein "what was good for God's birds was bad for God's gardener" (Jude, 15). Later, his dream of scholarship and Christminster is rudely interrupted by his acquaintance with Arabella, and his discovery of sexual desire for her. He feels helplessly drawn toward this woman by a force which "seemed to care little for his reason and his will, nothing for his so-called elevated intentions" (Jude, 38). His continuous elevation of Sue, and his unconscious involvement with her, accelerate his downfall, and eventually bring about his tragic end. The narrator prepares us very early in Jude's story for the fact that it is precisely Jude's sensitivity to the illogicality of life that makes Jude most vulnerable: "This weakness of character, as it may be called, suggested that he was the sort of man who was born to ache a good deal

before the fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life should signify that all was well with him again" (Jude, 15). Certainly, the truth of this statement is shown by the action of the novel. If Jude were not so sensitive, kind and fair-minded, he would have avoided many of the situations that led to his downfall as well as his tragic end.

Jude is as tragic a hero as any of Shakespeare's great tragic figures such as Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet or Othello. After his downfall, and the destruction of all his ambitions and aspirations, Jude admits his faults: "'My two Arch Enemies you know - my weakness for womankind and my impulse for strong liquor'" (Jude, 280). What this suggests is that it is not just Jude's marriage to Arabella that makes and marks his downfall; it is also his physical and sensual self. This marriage is a fault, not because Arabella is sinister and Jude is saintly, or Arabella is vicious and Jude is virtuous, or because Arabella is sensuous and Jude is spiritual, but because his marriage to her is antithetical to Jude's legitimate ambitions. As Jude realizes his weakness, he chooses to extinguish his mental and physical suffering, and put an end to a life which ought never to have been begun. Dying thus, Jude's death is not a defeat, it is an act of choice, accomplished through the exercise of his complete consciousness and will, and with this comes the triumph of his heroic strength.

Despite the weakness he admits to for women and drink, Jude remains, I believe, an admirable figure, one of "inviolable dignity", and as he is always acted upon by others, he never loses our esteem, he

is "never otherwise than sublime."[82] The forces which oppress him from within and without undermine his aspirations, and leave his aims unfulfilled. As a tragic hero of considerable nobility, we pity Jude because he struggles bravely to acquire knowledge even when the odds against him are overwhelmingly great. Though his hopes and desires are never more than partially realized, he always appears a pioneer "groping in the dark" (Jude, 258), striking out for the light, trying to soar and ascend the height(s), but always suffering the agony and anguish of disappointment. He decides to give up the fight with a consciousness that he has probably paved the way and prepared a better lot for those like him in the future.

Clyde, by contrast, lacks Jude's great tragic and dramatic intensity. Early in his life, Clyde shows his selfishness when his sister Esta returns, bearing within her the seed of the next American tragedy, and his mother wants some money to see her through her pregnancy. His mother's pleas for money had "made him a little sick and resentful" (Tragedy, 109). However, he rejects his mother's offer and lies to her about his savings giving little and keeping more for the girl whom he wants to seduce. During the Kansas City accident, Clyde does not show as much concern for the child who lost his life as about the loss of his job, and thinks he "must get out of this as quickly as possible. A child had been killed; a car stolen and wrecked; his job was most certainly lost" (Tragedy, 157). And as soon as he settles in Chicago he changes his name lest he should be discovered and punished. Clyde's refusal to help in the trouble of his sister, and his escape from the scene of the accident - an ominous prefiguration of his

behaviour after the drowning of Roberta - show Clyde's selfishness and lack of moral values which detract greatly from his heroic and tragic character.

Furthermore, Clyde's selfishness is most pointedly shown in Lycurgus especially in his involvement with Roberta. He threatens to desert Roberta if she does not give in to his sexual demands. And as he starts courting Sondra he does not reveal his entanglement with Roberta and lies about Sondra to Roberta. When Roberta becomes pregnant, and all attempts fail at an abortion, Clyde asks Sondra to run away with him. During her pregnancy Roberta pursues Clyde ceaselessly demanding that he join his life to hers, but when she forces the issue Clyde blunders his way into preparation for a murder which he is too weak to carry through. Clyde is thus a failure both in moral and heroic terms.

Throughout his life, Clyde does not seem to acquire self-knowledge as Jude does. We have already seen that Jude's story is essentially that of a dreamer whose dreams are unfulfilled, of a failure by the world's standards who nevertheless finds spiritual strength and self-knowledge through his suffering. Clyde, as his physical counterpart, also suffers, but suffers only the stress that Roberta puts on him during her trouble, and his suffering only serves to weaken his spirit and lead him away from genuine self-knowledge. At the same time that Jude is advancing toward self-awareness and an appreciation of the tragic nature of human existence, Clyde's wandering in the wilderness seeking material self-fulfilment does not lead him to any intellectual

insight into human nature. As he remains adrift in the metropolis, his understanding remains as limited as ever.

Jude's self-knowledge, as we know, has been acquired by a long route and a painful process, and that is why it is genuine. Although Jude has always had the potential for this kind of consciousness, it has taken most of the experiences of his life, from the beating given by Farmer Troutham to his rejection by Christminster, to the deaths of his children, and the loss of Sue, to develop it. Clyde, by contrast, does not seem to have the potential for any spiritual or mental growth. From his sister's experience which provides Clyde with a prefigurement of that of Roberta Alden, and which he, unfortunately, does not fully understand, to the car accident, and the loss of life, to Roberta's predicament and drowning, and finally Clyde's trial, all of these are mere incidents in his life and do not lead to any sort of self-knowledge except that Clyde wonders that "he had longed for so much ... and he had had so little" (Tragedy, 865). Indeed Clyde seems to have "a soul that was not destined to grow up" (Tragedy, 189).

Clyde does not seem to be able to master his fate. His conduct, his "inner directing application" (Tragedy, 189) and state of mind can always be contrasted with those of Jude. In the scene just preceding Jude's death when he is deteriorating physically, Jude endures Arabella's taunts, and when she unexpectedly offers to let him see Sue again, he firmly rejects the idea:

'I don't wish to see here again.'

'O - that's a change!'

'And don't tell her anything about me - that I'm ill, or anything. She has chosen her course. Let her go!' (Jude, 317).

Jude's firm manner in this scene demonstrates that he is master of himself. Recognizing the irrevocability of Sue's decision, he refuses to cherish false hopes. Although he could have sent word of his illness to Sue in order to arouse her sympathy, he chooses instead a more stoical posture. Clyde, by contrast, is a passive and weak person. In Dreiser's world passivity means lack of will, and lack of will in the case of Clyde is fatal. It is Clyde's "sudden palsy of will" (Tragedy, 266) that prevents him from murdering, as well as from having planned a murder successfully, or from having avoided a murder. On the boat, his thrusting out with the camera is a gesture of withdrawal, but it causes Roberta to fall and the boat to capsize. Unless he acts then, she will drown. He does not act, and lets the murder be committed for him by chance - or lets the murder commit itself. Thus Clyde's lack of will and his inability to act disqualify him as a tragic hero.

Where Jude gave too much, Clyde gave too little, and wanted more than he gave. And where Jude struggled valiantly, Clyde ran away rather than face the struggle. Where Jude endured much, Clyde suffered a little, and in repeated instances, he dodges the dilemma physically as well as mentally. His method of escape is always to beat against the bars rather than devise a way to outwit the jailer. And as Irving Howe puts it, in a passage mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Clyde

"has almost no assertive will, he lacks any large compelling idea, he reveals no special gift for the endurance of pain."

There is no indication at the end of the novel that Clyde has been sacrificed for the re-birth of society free from the delusions of the American Dream. In the frame of reference of Dreiser's novel, the fact that at the end the same group assembles on the same street corner with the same unhappy boy who asks for the same dime to get away from them for a moment, points bleakly to the start of another tragedy, another fatal combination of elements overseen by nothing but human forces ill-constructed to do anything but lead it to another murder.

An American Tragedy, then, is the tragedy of "human waste", and Clyde Griffiths, the one who acts it out, is not a hero of Jude's tragic stature. He is, as the novel shows, the victim of his own crime, "a victim collaborating in the crime that is his own death."[83]

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Conclusion

We have already seen in the opening section of this study that the young Dreiser had a high regard for Hardy's art. This is clearly expressed in his letters which show a good deal of admiration for the English author. By the time Dreiser was preparing for the composition of his first novel, he had read widely in the English novel of the nineteenth century, and it appears that this reading included most of Hardy's novels as well as those of George Moore, William Thackeray, George Eliot, Henry Fielding, and Charles Reade. Furthermore, Dreiser concluded his reading of Balzac, Hardy and Tolstoy with the succinct observation: "... From them I learned what, in my judgment, really great books are."[1] Dreiser's main concern was with the inner characterization of man, and with the appropriate techniques for its fictional presentation, and here, Hardy, communicating through his fiction a vision of the essential tragedy of man, held great interest for his young American admirer.

The results of the analysis of the characters' behaviour and motivation in the foregoing chapters show that Hardy and Dreiser share similar, if not the same, attitudes toward a broadly deterministic universe in which the protagonists of their novels are frequently little more than atoms in a world where "chance", coincidence, and "luck" play a significant role.[2] The lives these characters lead reflect a capacity for desire which has surpassed their ability for satisfaction. They

often find themselves in an extremely exhausted state in which the meretricious tokens of achievement or success no longer sustain a sense of personal fulfilment. These characters later discover that they are living in a world in which life is contingent and the opportunities for personal development are very limited.

The fact that so many of the novels' main characters end either in frustration of their hopes or in death is significant. Hardy's and Dreiser's novels present a sombre world view, which explains the emphasis on unhappiness and frustration in many of the novels. This is not to say, however, that Hardy and Dreiser invariably present in their fiction a wholly negative, defeatist, and pessimistic view of the human condition. The preceding chapters have shown that there is much in the novels to suggest that man may possess redeeming, even heroic, qualities. The dominant impression both authors are seeking to convey to the reader is that life is often unkind and difficult, and that those who expect too much will probably meet frustration. Further, in emphasizing this gloomy view of things in the most dramatic and intense form they could, the two authors were probably trying to help their readers to accept the necessity of suffering and the distress of disappointment.

Novel after novel, by both Hardy and Dreiser, shows us that defeat, rather than self-fulfilment, is likely to be the lot of the individual in the modern world. But there can be a degree of enlargement and even nobility in the way one meets that defeat. In characters like Eustacia and Henchard, defeat is brought about by their

defiance and stubbornness; and in characters like Carrie and Clyde, chiefly concerned with their own self-interest, defeat is occasioned by their desire to attain the unattainable. But Hardy's characters - such as Eustacia and Henchard - are enlarged by their defeat. Their refusal to knuckle under, their capacity to suffer, lends them a stature denied to a Carrie, a Clyde, or even a Hurstwood. Although they may eventually break, such characters maintain a brave fortitude long after most others would have given in.

Again Hardy's characters often gain the reader's respect by the way in which they maintain their personal integrity no matter what degree of pressure they are subjected to. What constitutes this integrity varies, depending on the characters. For Henchard, it is a sense of fair play; for Tess, it is unflinching fidelity to the object of her love; for Jennie - the only one among Dreiser's characters, who meets this test - it is always the same: self-sacrifice for the good of others; for Jude, it is a belief in man's intellectual potential, and a compassionate respect for his fellow creatures. Perhaps what is most important is that the core of each character's most cherished values is not determined by any outer source but emanates from the character's inner being. None of these characters has to hold on to his personal values; it would, in fact, usually be more expedient to abandon them. But for such characters, living in accordance with these values gives their existence some dignity and integrity despite all the defeats that they undergo.

What makes Hardy's characters the more impressive is their

greater capacity for self-knowledge. Their intellectual and unconventional attitudes are often in conflict with their immediate social environment. Dreiser's characters, by contrast, are rarely capable of such opposition, or of such complex moral development. They go through their lives blindly led by the tropisms of sex, money and comfort. They are superficially egoistic and intellectually limited. They are frequently seen incapable of that mature realization which can change, or, at least, illuminate their lives, and characterize them as tragic heroes. Without such self-knowledge Dreiser's heroes remain essentially victims, their suffering never relieved by any understanding of it. Hardy's heroes' understanding and acquiescence in the rightness of their destinies make them more akin to Shakespeare's heroes than Dreiser's.

Although most of the rebellious and defiant types of characters like Eustacia, Henchard and Clyde end up in defeat and death, there is a group of characters who succeed and survive - like Farfrae and Cowperwood. Survival in and of itself is not necessarily admirable, but these characters survive because they have developed an enlightened viewpoint based upon their acceptance of the reality of the struggle for survival with "matter-of-fact self-interest."[3] Farfrae and Cowperwood win in the battle of life and survive because they have brought their outlook of life into harmony with what is required for survival. This is neither hypocrisy nor giving in to society's pressures; it is rather a question of ruthlessness combined with circumspection. The price of survival, however, seems to be the loss of intensity of feeling and

largeness of stature. The tragic ends of the other kinds of characters (e.g., defiant, rebellious, unconventional) produce very dramatic and thematically desirable conclusions to the sad and painful lives of most of Hardy's and some of Dreiser's protagonists.

What helps to prevent the world-picture that emerges from being entirely black, however, is the suggestion of the possibility that humanity may evolve toward a more enlightened attitude. In fact, in such a statement as the following, Hardy implies a rather firm belief that mankind will indeed progress:

> In the lapse of countless ages, no doubt, improved systems of moral education will considerably and appreciably elevate even the involuntary instincts of human nature; but at present culture has only affected the surface of those lives with which it has come in contact, ...[4]

Dreiser also believed that while man is now in an intermediate stage and not in harmony with nature or his own will, "we have the consolation of knowing that evolution is ever in action, that the ideal is a light that cannot fail."[5] Charles C.Walcutt asserts that the naturalistic novelist's ability to say what he says about man reaffirms mankind's hope, and that natuarlism includes the writer's concept of his work as a beacon for progress.[6]

In the evolutionary principle then, there is the promise that things can change, but there is no guarantee that things will change for the better - at least for the individual. As Hardy and Dreiser remind us over and over again time does not only dwarf humanity by causing man

and man's own creation to decay, but there are also, "in the nature of change itself" the "ingredients of inevitable suffering, for it required the adjustment to a new social and moral outlook, as well as the acceptance of greater individual responsibility."[7] Furthermore, most of Hardy's and Dreiser's characters discover that their few moments of happiness will not endure the passing of time: Tess learns this and welcomes death rather than risk having Angel lose any of his love for her. Time, therefore, is often seen as a hostile force, but it can also be seen as a positive one in that it provides the dimension in which humanity can evolve, and it is to be hoped, progress.

There is some implication in the novels that if this change is to be positive, and if humanity is to live up to its potential, then man must evolve toward a more enlightened perspective in which he strives to achieve worthy and humane goals in a contingent world. Man, then, must develop new values based on more humane grounds. But Hardy and Dreiser, in fact, do not tell us how modern man is to go about this task. Both authors do imply that whatever significant development humanity may achieve must be based on compassion. Indeed, such a viewpoint is implicit in the behaviour of some of the main characters. For example, characters like Tess, Jude and Jennie, - certainly among Hardy's and Dreiser's most admirable and worthy protagonists, - embody an essentially compassionate attitude that could, if it were appreciated by society, form the philosophical basis for man as he seeks to understand the complex and often frightening issues of the modern world. In writing to a New York correspondent in 1909, Hardy expressed his hope that creation could evolve toward a less selfish and more compassionate

view : "'the discovery of the law of evolution, which revealed that all organic creatures are of one family, shifted the centre of altruism from humanity to the whole conscious world collectively.'"8

The constant emphasis in the novels on enduring behavioural patterns stresses that there is something human that survives the erosion of the passage of time. This quality of the novels, and the idea that man is evolving, both emphasize that it is the species in general that is ultimately the source of man's hope for future growth. Change is often perilous for the individual caught up in it. Humanity then has great potential as a species if it develops an enlightened attitude. However, this enlightened attitude must be sought by individuals first, who act as pioneers of sorts, in articulating and living out new, unconventional and progressive values.

Many of the novels considered like Tess, Jude, and Jennie show that such pioneering is really a highly painful process that often ends with either the death or defeat of the pioneer. It is the experience of this pattern of death or defeat that the reader of these novels undergoes. But out of that experience may come increased sympathy for the plight of others and understanding of the need for social change. In fact, much of the hope for the species lies in its ability to profit from the lessons embodied in the lives of the defeated individuals whose experience involving deep sorrow and pity will certainly motivate society to change, and hence sharpen the sensitivity of its collective conscience. Thus the novelist may see himself as participating in the evolutionary movement towards that improved human condition towards

which his characters have aspired.

We may conclude then, that despite some differences, Hardy and Dreiser are novelists of integrity seeking to express their vision of reality in their own individual ways. Both sought honestly to present their readers with an experience transcending the limits of a fashionable fiction that flattered the complacencies of its public. Their fiction stands as a moving testimony to the integrity of their vision and the art which gives it life.

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